Los Angeles Times

$3.66 DESIGNATED AREAS HIGHER © 2023 | TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 2023 | latimes.com

A city waits for Trump's day in court

New York braces for protests and crowds as the former president faces arraignment.

By Salvador Hernandez and Richard Winton

With former President Trump arriving in New York on Monday, Mayor Eric Adams said police were prepared for protests around his Tuesday arraignment but urged protesters and "rabble-rousers" — including Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene — to "be on your best behavior."

The warning came as New York braces for the possibility of protests, crowds and global attention as Trump is set to be arraigned.

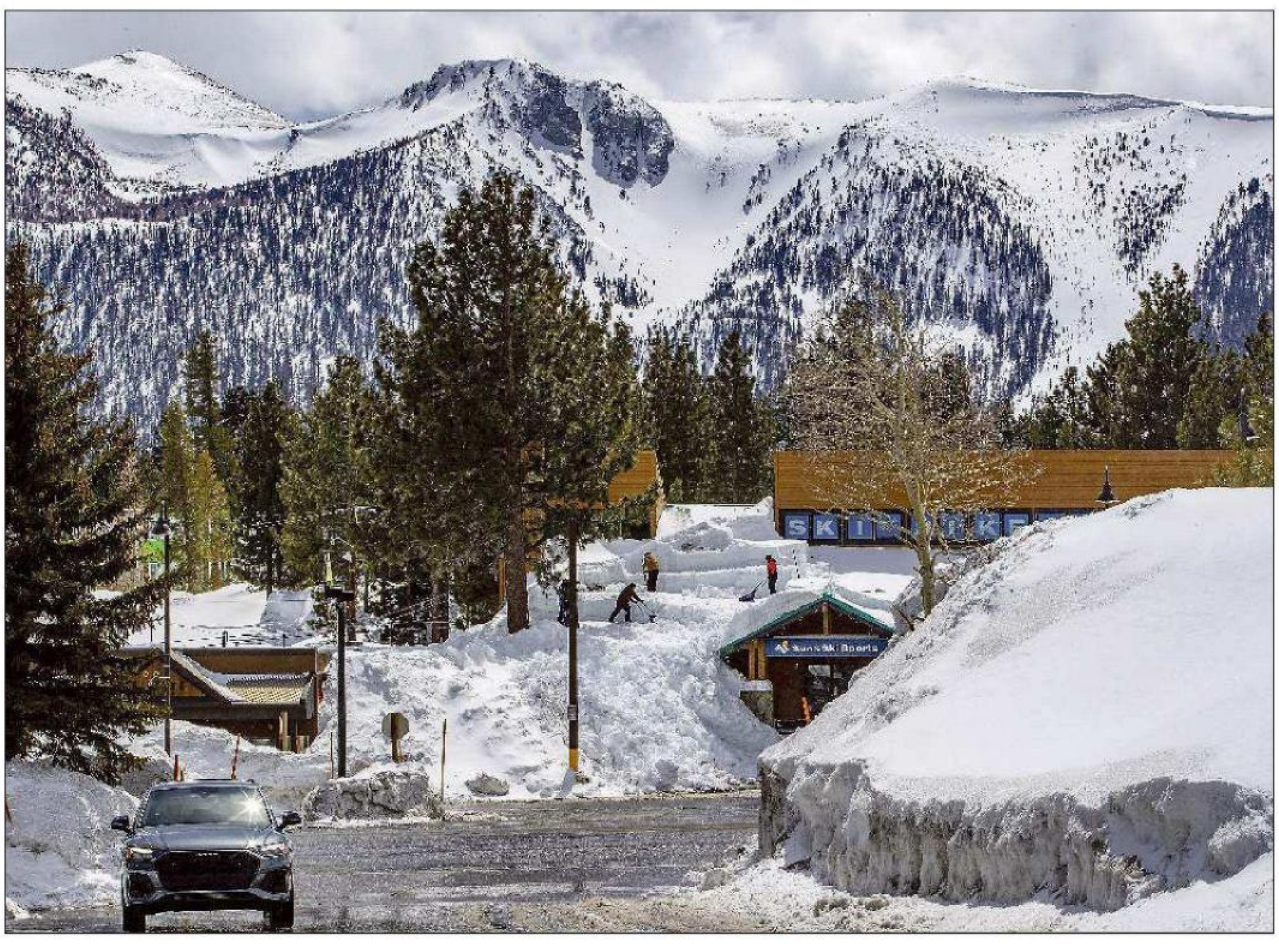
Adams and Police Commissioner Keechant L. Sewell said that there were no specific or credible threats in the run-up to Trump's court appearance but that the city would be significantly increasing its police presence as a precaution.

"New York is already always, always ready," Adams said during a news conference Monday. "While there may be some rabble-rousers thinking about coming to our city tomorrow, our message is clear and simple: Control yourselves."

But Tuesday's arraignment also comes as some supporters of the former president have called for protests, with some such as Greene (R-Ga.) also calling for the arrest of New York County Dist. Atty. Alvin L. Bragg for launching the grand jury inquiry into Trump.

The charges are related to an alleged hush-money payment made to a porn actor in the final days of the

[See **Trump,** A7]



Gina Ferazzi Los Angeles Times

WORKERS USE large shovels to remove snow from the roof of Sun & Ski Sports in Mammoth Lakes. Experts warn that the dense Sierra Nevada snowpack will soon melt, potentially unleashing torrents of water.

FEAR OF A 'BIG MELT' AFTER STORMS

California's record snowpack could bring flooding if weather warms too quickly.

By Sean Greene and Hayley Smith

California's wet and wintry start to the year has resulted in perhaps the deepest snowpack recorded in more than 70 years, officials said Monday.

The snowpack is so deep that it currently contains roughly 30 million acre-feet of water — or more water than Lake Mead, the nation's largest reservoir, according to a Times analysis of snow sensor data.

But though the bounty has eased drought conditions, experts warn that the dense Sierra Nevada snowpack will soon melt, potentially unleashing torrents of water and creating considerable concern about spring flooding in valleys, foothills and communities below.

"All of that water is going to have to come downhill sooner rather than later," said Daniel Swain, a climate scientist at UCLA. Incoming warmer weather is "good news for a lot of folks who need it, but it does mean that the 'big melt' is on the way."

State officials announced the record snowpack Monday at their fourth snow survey of the season at Phillips Station near South Lake Tahoe. The surveys are conducted monthly, with April 1 serving as the benchmark date when the snowpack is typically deepest.

The statewide snowpack on Monday was 237% of normal for the date — the deepest on record since the state's network of snow sensors was established in the mid-1980s. The snow water equivalent — or the amount of water contained in the snow — was 61.1 inches.

It is deeper than previous records of 227% set in 1983 and 224% set in 1969, and tied with the record of 237% set in 1952, measured using earlier tools and base lines. Those were the only other years with April snowpack above 200%, said Sean de Guzman, manager of snow surveys for the Department of Water Resources.

With some snow sensors yet to report, "it's looking like this year's statewide snowpack will probably most likely be either the first- or second-biggest snowpack on record dating back to 1950," De Guzman said.

Snowpack in the southern Sierra was even deeper, measuring a record 306% of normal for the date.

The Times' analysis is based on calculations by hydroclimatologist Michael Dettinger of UC San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the Desert Research Institute in Nevada.

The extraordinary snowpack was the direct result of

[See **Snowpack,** A7]

Was I transferred or expelled?

Murky reporting requirements skew data on disciplinary action taken by California schools

By Tara García Mathewson

Twice a week, Ricky Carmona, 16, leaves his La Verne home to attend school in makeshift classrooms a few doors down from the Boot Barn at a nearby strip mall.

He ended up at Options for Youth charter school in Upland after he was suspended from Bonita High School at the start of the 2022-23 academic year for vaping in the bathroom. Less than a week after the suspension, Stephanie Carmona, his aunt and guardian, received a letter: The principal had recommended Ricky for an "involuntary transfer" out of Bonita.

Ricky wasn't technically being expelled. But to him, it sure felt like it.

"A transfer is, like, something you do voluntarily," he said.

Transfers like Ricky's represent a large yet hidden share of California's exclusionary discipline, blocking students from attending their schools and pushing them onto new campuses or into smaller, alternative schools, according to an investigation by the Hechinger Report, a nonprofit education newsroom.

While some educators defend transfers as a gentler alternative to expulsion, critics say these moves have limited or no due process protections and can carry the same problems associated with expulsion by disrupting a child's education.

Despite policies that require California school districts to report the number of students transferred, the state Department of Education's overlapping and vague reporting requirements mean it's often unclear why a student changed schools.

California officials declined to provide statewide data about transfers, saying a database in which they maintain the information is exempt from disclosure because it contains identifying information about students.

A Hechinger analysis of

[See **Transfers,** A12]

Robert Gauthier Los Angeles Times

RICKY CARMONA, 16, with guardian Stephanie Carmona, was forced out of his school for vaping.

Francine Orr Los Angeles Times

MARINA ORLOVETSKY hugs Alex Bogancha as he arrives at LAX on Jan. 14.

Iger calls DeSantis' efforts to punish Disney 'anti-Florida'

By Meg James

Walt Disney Co. Chief Executive Bob Iger on Monday shot back at Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis amid an escalating tussle over the company's political positions and its ability to self-govern its expansive resorts in the Sunshine State.

The dispute has been simmering since Disney took a public stand a year ago on Florida's so-called Don't Say Gay legislation that bans public school discussions about sexual orientation in kindergarten through third grade. After Disney's then-CEO, Bob Chapek, said the company opposed the bill, DeSantis lashed out, leading an effort to strip the company's self-governing powers for its parks in central Florida.

The Burbank entertainment giant has since countered DeSantis' moves in an attempt to preserve its special status.

During Disney's annual meeting of shareholders Monday, Iger acknowledged the tensions with DeSantis, which one Florida investor worried might continue to reverberate throughout the state. Iger described the governor as being "very angry with the position Disney took."

"A company has a right to freedom of speech just like individuals do," Iger said. "It

[See **Iger,** A9]

COLUMN ONE

Courage and compassion help change war refugee's 'destiny'

Decades after a Ukrainian family hid a girl from Nazis, a community of strangers repays kindness

By Kailyn Brown

Alex Bogancha lay in bed, restless as he and a friend talked on the phone about whether Russia would invade Ukraine. It was before dawn on Feb. 24, 2022. He hadn't slept. War was all he could think about.

A few hours later, a thunderous explosion answered his question. A Russian missile struck near his home in Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine.

"It felt like it was right outside my window," the 18-year-old said.

Bogancha, his parents and his 14-year-old sister quickly loaded their dog, Lorik, and a few days' worth of clothes into their car. They joined a sea of traffic heading west.

"Everybody was scared," Bogancha said. "Nowhere seemed to be safe. We didn't know what to do."

For nearly a week, the family kept driving, sleeping in their car. Eventually they reached Austria, where another refugee helped them get an apartment. "We were lucky to find a place to live," Bogancha said.

They were grateful to have made it out, but Bogancha's father, Andrii, worried about the future for his son, who had been in the middle of his freshman year at Kharkiv National University. The father had hoped a quick end to the war would

[See **Refugee,** A4]

UFC, WWE form new powerhouse

Heavyweights tag-team to create a $21.4-billion company run by Vince McMahon and Ari Emanuel. **CALENDAR, E1**

Answers sought over 'white dust'

Delayed alert on hazard released by Bay Area refinery angers residents. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Weather

Mostly sunny and cool, L.A. Basin: 63/45. **B6**

K.C. Alfred San Diego Union-Tribune

HUSKIES ARE CHAMPS

Nathan Mensah, left, and San Diego State had their dreams dashed against Adama Sanogo and Connecticut, 76-59, in the title game. **SPORTS, B10**

VISIT…

A crucible moment for N.Y. judge in Trump's case

Juan Manuel Merchan has also overseen trials involving former president's company and associates.

By Jennifer Peltz and Michael R. Sisak

John Minchillo Associated Press

FORMER President Trump is to appear in court in Manhattan on Tuesday. The judge in the unprecedented arraignment of a former U.S. commander in chief is a former prosecutor with 16 years on the bench.

NEW YORK — His caseload has featured charges against former President Trump's company and some of Trump's closest associates in business and politics.

Now Judge Juan Manuel Merchan is poised to take on the historic hush-money prosecution of Trump himself.

Merchan, a former prosecutor with 16 years on the bench, is expected to preside Tuesday over the unprecedented arraignment of a former U.S. commander in chief. Trump will appear to answer charges arising from a grand jury investigation into payments made during his 2016 campaign to bury allegations that he had extramarital sexual encounters.

Trump, who is running for the White House again, says he's "completely innocent" and has called the case a "political persecution." He has also seized on Merchan's involvement.

The judge "HATES ME," Trump railed on his social media platform.

For any jurist, it would be a legacy-shaping case. And a crucible.

"There's a lot of pressure here because this is a novelty," said Patricia Brown Holmes, a former state court judge in Illinois who is now in private practice in Chicago.

As a judge, "you have to do it right. It has to be fair, the public has to know it's fair, and then the outcome is the outcome," she said. "You want to make sure that you are staying away from all the politics, because it is only about the law."

If politics make for one headache, another is balancing the need for openness against courtroom security for the former president and others, said Geoffrey Puryear, a former state court judge in Texas.

> 'It has to be fair, the public has to know it's fair, and then the outcome is the outcome.'
>
> — Patricia Brown Holmes, a former judge in Illinois, referring to the Trump case

"It's a logistical nightmare, from a judge's perspective," said Puryear, now a defense lawyer in Lubbock.

Merchan did not respond to a message seeking comment sent through court officials.

He got Trump's case because of a rotation in which judges are assigned to oversee grand juries and any cases that arise from them, according to the court system. Merchan also often handles financial cases.

The Colombian-born Merchan, 60, emigrated as a 6-year-old and grew up in New York City. The first member of his family to go to college, he worked his way through school and went on to earn a law degree from Hofstra University in 1994.

He was a Manhattan prosecutor and worked in the state attorney general's office before then-Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg appointed him as a family court judge in 2006.

Three years later, Merchan was assigned to the Supreme Court in New York, the state's highest trial-level court. His particular duties now include overseeing a Manhattan mental health court where some defendants get a chance to resolve their cases with treatment and supervision, a program he views as a success story.

Like a lot of New York judges, he's had experience with headline-making stories.

After skydivers were convicted of misdemeanors for leaping from the World Trade Center's now-signature tower while it was under construction in 2013, Merchan sentenced them to community service, saying they had "sullied the memories of those who jumped on 9/11 not for sport but because they had to."

Merchan also oversaw the real-life case that was the basis for the 2021 Lifetime movie "Soccer Mom Madam," about a suburban mother with a secret sideline running a high-end Manhattan escort service. The woman, Anna Gristina, now wants to unwind her 2012 guilty plea.

If those cases put Merchan in the public eye, the last two years trained a Trump-orbiting telescope on his courtroom.

First came the tax fraud case against Trump's company and its longtime finance chief, Allen Weisselberg.

Merchan was heavily involved in negotiations that led to Weisselberg's 2022 guilty plea for skirting taxes on big-dollar job perks, including Manhattan apartments and school tuition. Under the deal, Weisselberg got a five-month jail sentence in exchange for agreeing to testify against the company.

After hearing Weisselberg's testimony at trial, Merchan said he wished he could impose a tougher penalty. He was especially appalled that Weisselberg's wife got a one-time $6,000 payment for a no-show job to qualify for Social Security benefits, even as her husband made big money.

"So many Americans work so hard with the hopes that they may someday benefit from their contributions to Social Security," the judge observed. Nonetheless, he kept his sentencing promise.

Nicholas Gravante, who represented Weisselberg in the plea negotiations, said Merchan was "a real listener, well-prepared, always accessible, and a man who kept his word."

"He was mindful of the role my colleagues and I played as advocates, treating us with the utmost respect both in open court and behind closed doors," Gravante recalled.

The Trump Organization went to trial, saying that the company didn't benefit from Weisselberg's scheme and that Trump and his family knew nothing about it. A jury convicted the company, and Merchan imposed a $1.6-million fine — the legal maximum.

Trump was not charged in that case. But when it came time for closing arguments, Merchan let prosecutors claim that Trump knew about the tax-cheating maneuvers. The judge said it was "only fair" because the defense summation had mentioned Trump repeatedly. The defense sought a mistrial over the issue; Merchan said no.

Merchan said he wanted to keep politics out of the trial, which he conducted with a largely even-tempered and kindly tone.

He got annoyed when the Trump Organization's lawyers sought to introduce new evidence late in the trial, ultimately allowing them to do so in a limited fashion. After the verdict, it emerged that Merchan had secretly held the company in contempt of court for "willfully disobeying" four grand jury subpoenas and three court orders.

Separately, former Trump White House strategist Stephen K. Bannon is on Merchan's docket. Charged with duping donors who gave money to build a southern U.S. border wall, Bannon has called the case "nonsense." A presidential pardon from Trump truncated a similar federal prosecution.

Trump has a history of questioning judges' legitimacy or impartiality in cases involving his business or administration. While he was a candidate trumpeting his planned border wall, he pointed to an Indiana-born federal judge's "Mexican heritage" to suggest he couldn't fairly handle a lawsuit against the now-defunct Trump University.

As president, Trump referred to another federal jurist as a "so-called judge" after he ruled against Trump's initial travel ban affecting seven predominantly Muslim countries.

Trump has already gone on the offensive against Merchan, claiming he "railroaded" Weisselberg into a plea and acted "viciously" in the Trump Organization case.

For any judge, criticism can come with the job. But jurists need to focus on their courtrooms, not the court of public opinion, Holmes noted.

"You're not the center of attention. The evidence is the center of attention," she said.

Peltz and Sisak write for the Associated Press.

Biden on ex-president's arrest: I have faith in the legal system

By Erin B. Logan and Kwasi Gyamfi Asiedu

MINNEAPOLIS — President Biden told reporters Monday that he is confident New York City police can handle any unrest surrounding former President Trump's planned arrest in Manhattan on Tuesday.

"I have faith in the New York Police Department," Biden said.

The president, speaking to reporters during a trip to Minneapolis to promote the bipartisan infrastructure bill he signed in 2021, was careful to not weigh in on the Manhattan case. Asked whether he had faith in the U.S. legal system, he gave a one-word answer: "Yes."

Prosecutors in Manhattan have been investigating Trump's alleged entanglement with hush money that his former fixer, Michael Cohen, paid to adult film actor Stormy Daniels during the 2016 presidential campaign.

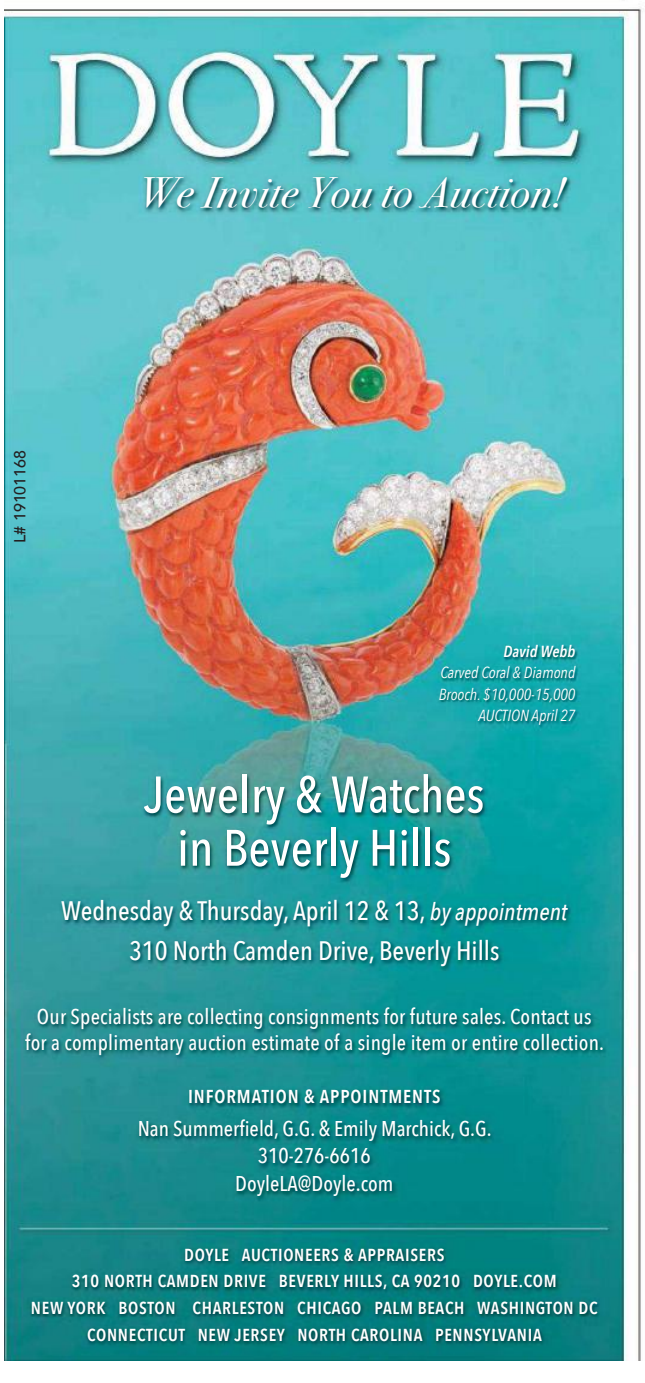
Cohen was convicted of a variety of crimes after admitting to paying Daniels $130,000 with the expectation she would stay quiet about a sexual encounter she had with Trump in the early 2000s.

Trump repaid Cohen through his business, the Trump Organization, and labeled the expense as "legal fees," despite Cohen performing no legal work during that time.

Falsifying business records is a misdemeanor under New York state law. Manhattan Dist. Atty. Alvin Bragg is also reportedly planning to charge Trump with at least one felony.

House Republicans have declared the investigation an abuse of power and demanded prosecutors hand over documents. In a March letter, Bragg said he would not share the records, calling the Republicans' request an "unlawful incursion."

Last month, Trump warned of "potential death and destruction" if he were indicted.


DOYLE
We Invite You to Auction!
L# 19101168
David Webb
Carved Coral & Diamond
Brooch. $10,000-15,000
AUCTION April 27
Jewelry & Watches
in Beverly Hills
Wednesday & Thursday, April 12 & 13, by appointment
310 North Camden Drive, Beverly Hills
Our Specialists are collecting consignments for future sales. Contact us for a complimentary auction estimate of a single item or entire collection.
INFORMATION & APPOINTMENTS
Nan Summerfield, G.G. & Emily Marchick, G.G.
310-276-6616
DoyleLA@Doyle.com
DOYLE AUCTIONEERS & APPRAISERS
310 NORTH CAMDEN DRIVE BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90210 DOYLE.COM
NEW YORK BOSTON CHARLESTON CHICAGO PALM BEACH WASHINGTON DC
CONNECTICUT NEW JERSEY NORTH CAROLINA PENNSYLVANIA

DeSantis signs bill that expands gun rights

Floridians will be able to carry concealed firearms without a permit under the law pushed by the GOP.

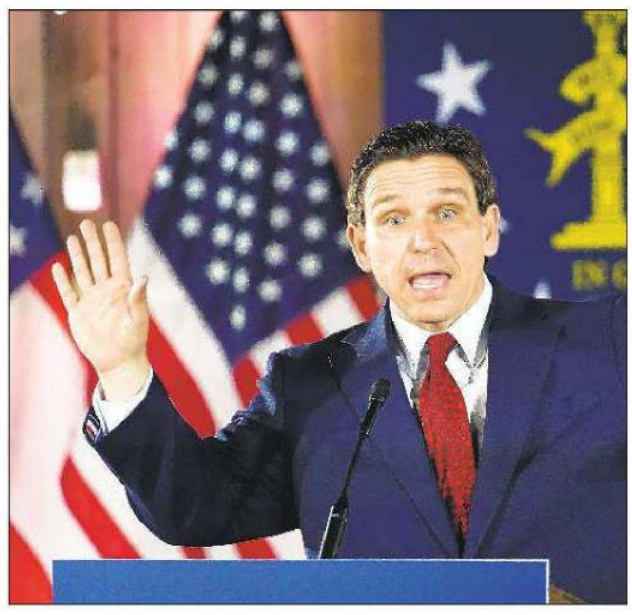
Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Floridians will be able to carry concealed guns without a permit under a bill Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis signed Monday, giving the governor another legislative victory as he prepares a campaign for president.

The Florida governor signed the bill in a private ceremony in his office. His only immediate public comment was, "Constitutional Carry is in the books," which he said in a three-paragraph news release.

The new law will allow anyone who can legally own a gun in Florida to carry one without a permit. It means training and a background check will not be required to carry concealed guns in public. It takes effect July 1.

The arguments over the legislation were divided along political lines, with Republicans saying law-abiding citizens have a right to carry guns and protect themselves. They say most people will still want to get a permit because it will allow them to carry concealed weapons in states with reciprocal agreements and to be able to purchase guns without a waiting period.



John Bazemore Associated Press

FLORIDA Gov. Ron DeSantis speaks at a gun store in the Atlanta suburb of Smyrna, Ga., on Thursday.

However, Democrats and gun-safety advocates — pointing to mass shootings in Florida such as the 2016 massacre at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando and the deadly 2018 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland — say the new law will only make the state more dangerous.

"I am pissed," Fred Guttenberg, whose 14-year-old daughter, Jaime, was killed in Parkland, told reporters during an online news conference. "I will chase him down across the state as well as possibly across the country ... because Ron DeSantis today put his signature to a bill that guarantees there will be more Jaimes."

And he said signing the bill behind closed doors makes DeSantis a coward.

"Somebody in Florida may die ... because of this legislation. That will be because of you, Ron DeSantis," Guttenberg said. "I understand why you hid today ... You are a weak, pathetic, small-minded individual."

Nearly 3 million Floridians have a concealed weapons permit. Although a background check and three-day waiting period will still be required to purchase a gun from a licensed dealer, they are not required for private transactions or exchanges of weapons.

DeSantis has said he thinks Florida should go even further and allow people to openly carry guns. Although some lawmakers have pushed for open carry, it doesn't appear the Legislature will pass such legislation this session.

The bill signing comes five years after then-Gov. Rick Scott, a Republican, signed a bill creating gun restrictions after 17 students and faculty were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas. Under DeSantis, momentum has swung back toward expanding gun rights rather than placing limits on them, which has earned him praise from gun rights advocates.

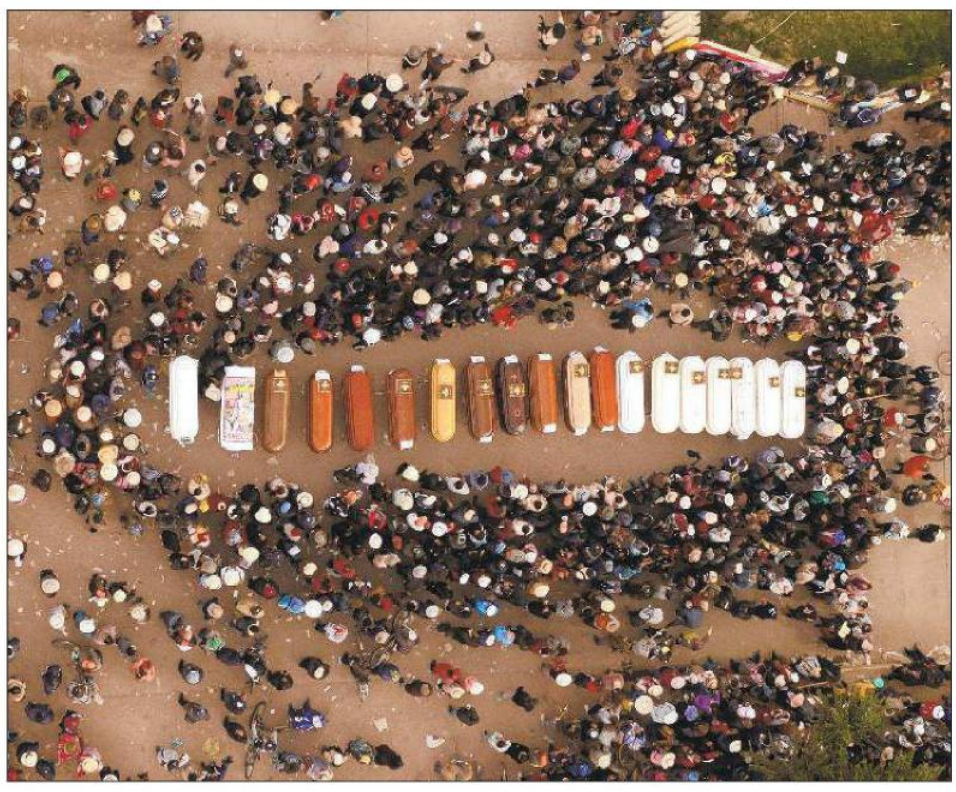
"Government will not get in the way of law-abiding Americans who want to defend themselves and their families," Republican Sen. Jay Collins, who sponsored the bill, said in a news release.

It also comes one week after six people were killed in a school shooting in Nashville.

Autopsies cite gunfire in Peru protester deaths

Human rights groups have called on the country's government to investigate claims of excessive force.

By Franklin Briceño



Jose Sotomayor Associated Press

PERUVIANS hold a vigil in January for over a dozen people who died during protests in Juliaca. Security officers have been accused of using excessive force.

LIMA, Peru — In autopsy after autopsy, Peruvian anti-government protesters share the same cause of death: "firearm projectile."

Christian Armando Mamani, a 22-year-old musician, was protesting in a southern city when a bullet entered the left side of his torso and pierced both of his lungs.

The same January day, Roger Rolando Cayo, a 25-year-old protester, died when a shot ripped through his eye and destroyed his brain.

Human rights groups — including the United Nations — have called on the Peruvian government to investigate claims of excessive force used by police and soldiers during recent protests that have left 49 civilians dead, and the autopsies provide some evidence of the alleged use of lethal ammunition.

Thirty of the 32 forensic reports obtained by the Associated Press list gunfire as the cause of death. Some of the reports detail bullet calibers similar to those used by security forces in Peru, which experts believe indicates that police and soldiers violated their own operations manuals prohibiting shooting directly toward protesters unless there's a serious risk to their life.

The findings come as Peru struggles to recover from the political crisis that hit the country late last year. In December, then-President Pedro Castillo, who was facing several corruption investigations, attempted to dissolve Congress but was instead impeached, arrested and replaced by the vice president. Demonstrations stretched out to February, mostly in southern Peru, where the former leader has had more support, triggering the worst political violence the country has seen in more than two decades.

In the southern city of Juliaca, protesters clashed with police outside the airport on Jan. 9 in what would be the deadliest demonstration. Autopsies confirmed that 18 people died from gunfire that day. Among the dead were a 16-year-old student whose left lung was perforated by a 7.62-millimeter bullet that lodged in his abdomen and a 17-year-old university student who died from a 9-millimeter bullet wound.

The Associated Press obtained a copy of a document from the federal prosecutor's office that listed the weapons used by police in Juliaca in December, including 7.62-millimeter AKM assault rifles and 9-millimeter Beretta and Sauer handguns.

In Peru, civilians are permitted to own guns with only low calibers. High-caliber guns — including the 7.62- and 5.56-millimeter types mentioned in the forensic reports — are exclusively for the use of security forces.

Carmen Rosa Cardoza, a Peruvian forensic anthropologist, told the Associated Press that the autopsies show a pattern of a "disproportionate use of force."

"In the injuries by the firearm projectiles, there's a pattern linked to human rights violations," she said, noting that most of the fatal wounds are on the head, neck, thorax and abdomen. The shooters, she said, "are targeting those regions."

Protesters are still staging roadblocks in some parts of the country and calling for the resignation of the new president, Dina Boluarte, whom they blame for the deaths of dozens of demonstrators in areas inhabited largely by Indigenous people.

The attorney general's office has begun an investigation — including Boluarte — that hasn't led to any arrests.

"These numbers turn Peru into a champion of repression, when compared to other democracies in Latin America" said Jo-Marie Burt, a Peru expert at the Washington Office on Latin America, a human rights group. "Only openly authoritarian nations like Venezuela and Nicaragua" have had more deaths during recent protests, she said.

Peruvian government officials have not responded to the Associated Press' request on whether they gave police orders to shoot at protesters after massive demonstrations broke out in the south, where Castillo's removal angered people frustrated with the nation's Congress, which has has become one of the nation's least trusted institutions.

Boluarte has blamed "radicals" linked to illegal mining and the drug trade for the chaotic protests, which have included the occupation of airports and attacks against police bases. But the autopsies, videos and witness testimonies paint a different picture of the violence, in which the nation's security forces also appear to have had a significant role.

On Dec. 15, demonstrators gathered outside the Ayacucho airport, where security camera videos show soldiers firing Galil rifles horizontally instead of pointing the weapons upward, away from protesters. Forensic reports show 10 protesters died from gunfire in Ayacucho that day, although none of the corpses contained bullets.

Three days later, an Associated Press reporter walked through the area where the shots were fired and found several cases for the 5.56-millimeter ammunition used with Galil rifles on the floor.

In Andahuaylas, another southern city, 18-year-old protester Wilfredo Lizarme was killed by a bullet to his back on Dec. 11, according to forensic reports. His sister, Carla, found a shell casing close to his body with the legend "PNP 7,62x39," the initials of Peru's national police and the same caliber as the bullets used by police in other parts of the country.

The Associated Press has repeatedly sought a response from Peru's government about the allegations of police violence against protesters but has yet to receive one.

In a January news conference, Boluarte evaded questions about whether she ordered the police to use firearms to break up protests and said that police officers had conducted themselves in an "immaculate" manner.

Police say officers have been trying to defend themselves from violent protesters who have attacked them with improvised weapons, including slingshots and fireworks launched from metal tubes. According to Peru's National Police, 43 police stations were attacked over the last three months and more than 850 officers sustained injuries during the protests, while one officer was burned alive in his patrol car in Juliaca.

However, human rights groups contend that police haven't followed all regulations.

Mar Pérez, a researcher for the Peruvian National Coordinator for Human Rights group, said the manual for use of force stipulates that officers can use firearms and shoot to kill only when their lives are at risk.

The fact that there are violent people in a protest doesn't justify the use of firearms or authorize police to dissolve the entire protest, said Paulo Abrao, a former executive secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights requested in January that Peru's government begin an inquiry into the use of weapons by police during the protests. Then, in the last week of February, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights sent a document to the government that expressed concern and gave it 60 days to provide more information on what it is doing to investigate the killings and implement policies that prevent the excessive use of force in protests.

The National Coordinator for Human Rights says that since 2003, it has documented 160 deaths during protests in Peru. Pérez said that "not a single police officer" has been convicted in these killings.

Briceño writes for the Associated Press.

Russia blames Ukraine for cafe blast

Moscow says spy agencies orchestrated the deadly attack on a pro-war blogger. Kyiv doesn't respond.

Associated Press

Russian authorities blamed Ukrainian intelligence agencies Monday for orchestrating a bombing at a St. Petersburg cafe that killed a Russian military blogger who fervently supported Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, and they arrested a suspect accused of involvement in the attack.

Ukrainian authorities did not directly respond to the accusation, but President Volodymyr Zelensky said he did not think about events in Russia and a senior Ukrainian official described the bombing as part of Russia's internal turmoil.

Vladlen Tatarsky, 40, was killed Sunday as he was leading a discussion at a cafe on the banks of the Neva River in the historic heart of Russia's second-largest city, officials said. Tatarsky, who had filed regular reports from the front lines in Ukraine, was the pen name of Maxim Fomin and accumulated more than 560,000 followers on his Telegram messaging app channel.

The bombing, which also wounded more than 30 other people, was the latest attack inside Russia on a high-profile pro-war figure. Ten of the wounded remain in grave condition, according to authorities. Last year, a nationalist TV commentator was killed when a bomb exploded in her SUV outside Moscow.

Investigators have said they believe that the bomb was hidden in a bust of the blogger that was given to him just before the explosion. A video showed Tatarsky making jokes about the bust and putting it on the table next to him.

Russian authorities Monday announced the arrest of Darya Trepova, a 26-year-old St. Petersburg resident who has been seen on video presenting Tatarsky with the bust. Last year, she was detained by police for participating in a rally against the Ukraine war on the day of the invasion and spent 10 days in jail.

The Interior Ministry released a brief video showing Trepova telling a police officer that she brought the statuette that exploded in the cafe. When asked who gave it to her, she said she would explain it later.

According to Russian media reports, Trepova told investigators that she was asked to deliver the bust but didn't know what was hidden in it.

The National Anti-Terrorist Committee, which coordinates counter-terrorism operations, said that the bombing was "planned by Ukrainian special services" and noted that Trepova was an "active supporter" of jailed Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. Navalny, the Kremlin's fiercest foe, who has exposed official corruption and organized massive anti-government protests, is serving a nine-year fraud sentence that he has denounced as a political vendetta.

Navalny associate Ivan Zhdanov warned that Russian authorities could push false allegations of involvement in the attack by Navalny's supporters to set the stage for another trial that would extend his prison term. He also alleged that Russian security agencies could be behind the explosion to cast Navalny's supporters as an "internal enemy."

According to Russian media reports, police tracked down Trepova using surveillance cameras, though she reportedly cut her long hair short to change her look and rented a different apartment in an apparent attempt to escape.

Russian military bloggers and patriotic commentators compared the bombing to the August assassination of nationalist TV commentator Darya Dugina, who was killed when a remote-controlled device blew up her SUV as she was driving on the outskirts of Moscow. Russian authorities blamed Ukraine's military intelligence for Dugina's death, but Kyiv denied involvement.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the attacks on Dugina and Tatarsky proved that Moscow was justified in launching what it describes as its "special military operation" in Ukraine.

"Russia has faced the Kyiv regime, which has supported terrorist activities," Peskov said.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, the Russian millionaire owner of the Wagner Group military contractor spearheading Moscow's offensive in eastern Ukraine, said he owned the cafe and handed it over to a patriotic group for meetings. He said he doubted the Ukrainian authorities' involvement in the bombing, saying the attack was probably launched by a "group of radicals" unconnected to the government in Kyiv.

Zelensky brushed off questions about the bombing Monday.

"I don't think about what is happening in St. Petersburg or Moscow. Russia should think about this. I am thinking about our country," Zelensky told journalists.

Although not claiming responsibility for various explosions, bombings and other attacks within Russia since the Feb. 24, 2022, invasion, officials in Kyiv have jubilantly greeted them and insisted on Ukraine's right to launch such assaults.

Ukrainian presidential advisor Mykhailo Podolyak responded to the news about the bombing attack in St. Petersburg by casting it as a result of infighting in Russia.

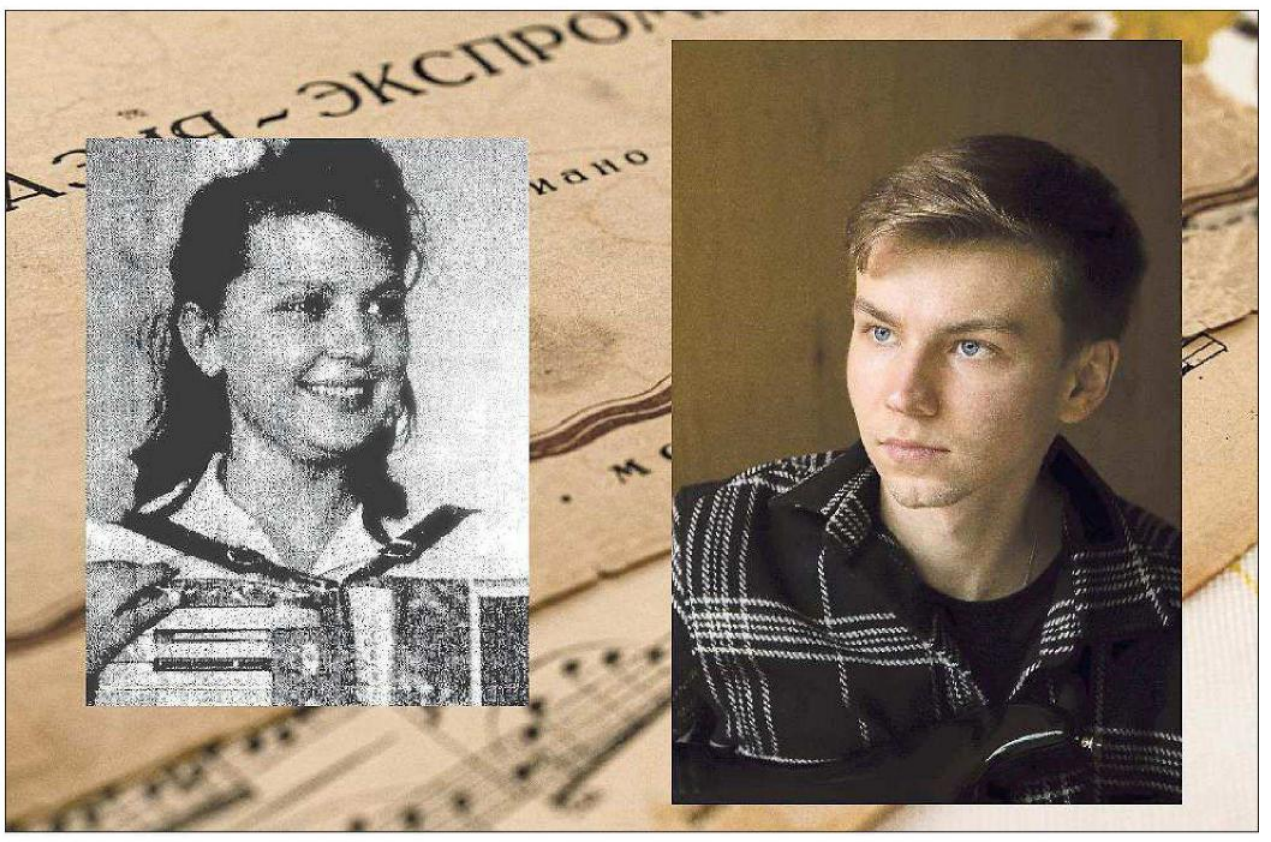
"Spiders are eating each other in a jar," Podolyak wrote in English on Twitter late Sunday. "Question of when domestic terrorism would become an instrument of internal political fight was a matter of time."

On Monday, Podolyak said that Russia had "returned to the Soviet classics," citing its increasing isolation, the rise of espionage cases and an increase in political repression.

Last week, Russia's security service announced the arrest of Evan Gershkovich, an American reporter for the Wall Street Journal, on suspicion of spying. It is the first time a U.S. correspondent has been detained on such accusations since the Cold War.

FORE TOLD
A NEW PODCAST
CAN A FORTUNETELLER CHANGE HER FUTURE?
"Foretold" is a new podcast from the L.A. Times, exploring the insular and sometimes misunderstood Romani community. In this series, Times reporter Faith Pinho is joined by Romani American fortuneteller Paulina Stevens for a unique perspective on life in a culture that outsiders rarely get to see.
Scan the code to listen and follow, or visit latimes.com/foretold
Listen on Apple Podcasts
LISTEN ON Spotify
Los Angeles Times

'Destiny' shifts for Ukrainian refugee after kindness is met with kindness



LEFT: GREG DAWSON; RIGHT: FRANCINE ORR Los Angeles Times; BACKGROUND: SYDNEY WALSH For The Times

A YOUNG Zhanna Arshanskaya Dawson, left, and Alex Bogancha, whose ties now transcend generations.

[**Refugee,** from A1]
allow the young man to continue his studies, but the fighting kept going.

Then came an unexpected offer of help in a WhatsApp message from a woman 6,000 miles away in Tarzana. She knew something special about the family's history that would alter the course of his son's life.

"I never believed in destiny," Bogancha said. "But after this situation, I've changed my mind."

The day was bitterly cold as Zhanna Arshanskaya Dawson desperately knocked on the door of the Bogancha home.

It was winter 1941. Dawson, 14, had trudged for miles in the snow, holding fast to five sheets of music, Frédéric Chopin's "Fantaisie-Impromptu," tucked under her clothing and her father's final words in her ears: "I don't care what you do, just stay alive."

That day, Nazi troops had rounded up Dawson and her family and sent them, along with other Jews, on a 12-mile march toward a ravine at the southern edge of Kharkov, as the city was then known. Just a mile from the destination, Dawson's father bribed a guard with a gold pocket watch to let his daughter escape.

She fled, hiding in a crowd of onlookers, never to see her parents or grandparents again. They, along with about 16,000 others, were executed on the edge of the ravine, known as Drobitsky Yar.

Dawson sought refuge at the home of a non-Jewish classmate, Nicolai Bogancha. She hoped his family — whom she knew as "good-hearted people" — would let her in.

When his mother answered the door, she pulled Dawson inside to safety.

Two days later, the Bogancha family heard that Dawson's 12-year-old sister, Frina, was nearby, hiding with another family. They took her in too. Frina, who died in 2019, never revealed how she escaped.

For two weeks, the girls hid in an underground fruit cellar whenever they were spooked by an unexpected noise or visit.

But the sisters were precocious piano players and local celebrities. Everyone knew they were Jewish. What if a neighbor spotted them? They needed a new plan.

They adopted new birthdays and names. Zhanna became Anna and Frina became Marina. The Boganchas helped them devise a story to explain why they were suddenly orphans — their imaginary father was a Russian army officer killed in action, and their mother had died in a bombing.

The Boganchas arranged for a horse cart to take the girls to the city outskirts. From there, the girls made their way to an orphanage, where a piano tuner eventually heard Dawson play. He introduced the two girls to a theater director who was in charge of entertaining German soldiers. The sisters performed for them throughout the rest of the war, securing their survival.

Years later, after the sisters immigrated to the U.S., after they attended the Juilliard School of Music in New York, and after Dawson married and began to teach music at Indiana University, she told the story to her son, Greg Dawson, who wrote a book about her experience, "Hiding in the Spotlight: A Musical Prodigy's Story of Survival."

"I was not playing for them," Dawson told her son. "I was playing for my mother and my father and for the music. For Beethoven, for Mozart, that's who I was playing for."

In 2013, Marina Orlovetsky of Tarzana was given a copy of the book. She read it in a single sitting.

"I just couldn't stop reading it," she said.

Orlovetsky, 61, grew up in Kharkiv too but didn't know the Drobitsky Yar tragedy happened in her hometown. Her Soviet-era school books never mentioned the word "Holocaust."

For her, Dawson's story was key to unlocking the true history of her birthplace. She set out to find her and discovered Dawson was living in Atlanta. After spotting her phone number online, Orlovetsky called, and the two spoke in Russian for nearly three hours.

GREG DAWSON

DAWSON and sister Frina performed for German soldiers. They adopted new birthdays and names; Zhanna became Anna and Frina became Marina.

FRANCINE ORR Los Angeles Times

BOGANCHA, an 18-year-old refugee from Ukraine, is pleasantly surprised upon arriving at his new temporary home on Jan. 14 in Santa Monica.

"She told me everything," Orlovetsky recalled. "That was how our friendship began. I was fascinated by her story. It was like part of my life."

A couple of months later, she met Dawson and her son at a Holocaust Remembrance Day event at Chapman University in Orange County.

At 86, Dawson had been invited to perform her signature piece — Chopin's "Fantaisie-Impromptu." She did so, effortlessly, from memory. The five pages of sheet music she had carried with her when she fled the Nazis were safe at her son's home.

A few years later, Orlovetsky stumbled upon an article about the Holocaust that Andrii Bogancha had posted on Facebook. His last name caught her attention. His ancestors had saved her friend on that bleak day in 1941.

She sent him a message: "I just told him, please accept my biggest respect for you and your family," Orlovetsky said.

She then followed up with a gift basket, which included a copy of "Hiding in the Spotlight" and a CD with recordings of Dawson's piano performances.

> 'I think we just need to be thankful for everything that we can, so that we can live. We have such kind people around us.'
>
> — ALEX BOGANCHA, Ukrainian refugee

SYDNEY WALSH For The Times

Orlovetsky and Andrii Bogancha kept in touch over the years. As war once again approached Kharkiv, they exchanged messages. She stayed in touch throughout the Boganchas' escape, then made her offer of help.

Once Andrii Bogancha accepted, Orlovetsky reached out to Greg Dawson and his wife, Candy, for assistance. They had been volunteering with Ukrainian Mothers and Children Transport (UMACTransport), which helps Ukrainian refugees come to the U.S.

"I'm a son of Holocaust survivors," said one of the founders of the group, Michael Bazyler, a Chapman University law professor.

Bazyler's mother would talk about growing up in a peaceful Ukraine — until "all of a sudden being bombed and running away with her family." The Russian invasion has felt like "a repeat of the horror story," he said. In another coincidence, he was the one who had invited Dawson to play Chopin at the Chapman concert where she and Orlovetsky had first met in person.

UMACTransport volunteers secured Alex Bogancha's admission to Santa Monica College, and a local filmmaker, Andy Lauer, agreed to be his financial sponsor.

"I have an 18-year-old son. What if he was suddenly displaced?" said Lauer, who hosted a Ukrainian family of five last spring. "For me, it was personal."

Michael Solomon, whose wife of 32 years died of cancer last year, offered to let Bogancha move into his poolside guesthouse in Santa Monica. "It just felt like the right thing to do," said Solomon, 72.

Greg Dawson booked Bogancha's flight. Orlovetsky shopped for necessities.

"All the pieces just came together," she said.

On a wet January afternoon, nine months after she sent her WhatsApp message, Orlovetsky stood amid a group of well-wishers at LAX clutching a plate with a loaf of bread and salt — a welcoming gesture.

When they spotted Bogancha making his way through the terminal, the group cheered enthusiastically and waved American flags — then took turns embracing him. Orlovetsky FaceTimed Bogancha's parents to let them know he'd arrived safely. His mother sobbed as he smiled and waved.

"He's here!" Orlovetsky said in Russian. "He's finally here!"

Bogancha was disappointed that he never got a chance to meet Zhanna Arshanskaya Dawson, who died at 95 just days before he arrived, but he's quickly settled into his new life: He walks 15 minutes to school — his backpack slung on his shoulder, the school's logo on his sweatshirt. The surf and sand are less than two miles away. The view is starkly different than in war-stricken Kharkiv.

Any day now, Bogancha's parents and younger sister are expecting to receive approval to join him in L.A. He hopes to take them to Disneyland.

"I think we just need to be thankful for everything that we can, so that we can live," he said. "We have such kind people around us."

Since being in L.A., he's eaten at In-N-Out Burger — a rite of passage — gone on hikes in Malibu, taken the bus on his own to explore Hollywood and walked along the Santa Monica Pier.

He's found comfort by practicing guitar and befriending other Ukrainian refugee teens through the messaging app Telegram.

Dawson had dementia for several years before her death, so her son wasn't able to tell her about the Russian invasion or how the family had been able to reciprocate after the kindness the Boganchas had bestowed on her decades ago.

But the events have prompted Greg Dawson to reflect on his own legacy, including the birth of his granddaughter, who wouldn't be alive if not for the risks that the earlier generation of the Bogancha family had taken.

Once all the Boganchas arrive in California, Greg Dawson, who lives in Florida, plans to host a memorial service in L.A. for his mother — and invite the village of strangers who helped the two families reconnect.

"What a shame it is that she is not able to see this part of the story. The way it comes full circle," he said. "It's further redemption of everything they went through and everything the Boganchas did for them."

As for Orlovetsky, who served as the bridge between the two families, she says she "just did what every normal human being would do."

"I just want to make them feel that every good deed will be [paid back] 1,000 times more when you do something good."

FOR THE RECORD

Taser use: In the April 3 California section, an article about the use of Tasers by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department used the term "stun gun." Although "stun gun" and "Taser" are sometimes used interchangeably, in this instance, the devices in question were Tasers.

How to contact us

(800) LA TIMES

Home Delivery and Membership Program
For questions about delivery, billing and vacation holds, or for information about our Membership program, please contact us at (213) 283-2274 or membershipservices@latimes.com. You can also manage your account at myaccount.latimes.com.

Letters to the Editor
Want to write a letter to be published in the paper and online? E-mail letters@latimes.com. For submission guidelines, see latimes.com/letters.

Readers' Representative
If you believe we have made an error, or you have questions about our journalistic standards and practices, our readers' representative can be reached at readers.representative@latimes.com, (877) 554-4000 or online at latimes.com/readersrep.

Advertising
For print and online advertising information, go to latimes.com/mediakit or call (213) 237-6176.

Reprint Requests
For the rights to use articles, photos, graphics and page reproductions, e-mail reprint@latimes.com or call (213) 237-4565.

Times In Education
To get the digital Los Angeles Times at no cost (along with our newspaper–based teaching materials), contact us at latimes.com/tie, or email Heidi.stauder@latimes.com

The Newsroom
Know something important we should cover? Send a secure tip at latimes.com/tips. To send a press release go to the newsroom directory at latimes.com/staff.

Media Relations
For outside media requests and inquiries, e-mail commsdept@latimes.com.

L.A. Times Store
Search archives, merchandise and front pages at latimes.com/store.

Los Angeles Times
A California Times Publication
Founded Dec. 4, 1881
Vol. CXLII No. 122

LOS ANGELES TIMES
(ISSN 0458-3035)
is published by the Los Angeles Times, 2300 E. Imperial Highway, El Segundo, CA 90245. Periodicals postage is paid at Los Angeles, CA, and additional cities.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the above address.

Home Delivery Subscription Rates (all rates include applicable CA sales taxes and apply to most areas)

Print + unlimited digital rates: Seven-day $28/week, $1,456 annually. Thursday–Sunday $16/week, $832 annually. Thursday & Sunday $10/week, $520 annually. Saturday & Sunday $9/week, $468 annually. Sunday $8.50/week, $442 annually. Monday–Saturday $18/week, $936 annually (also includes Sundays, except 2/19, 4/9, 9/3, and 10/8). Monday–Friday $16/week, $832 annually.

Pricing for all subscriptions includes the Thanksgiving 11/23/23 issue.

All subscriptions may include up to eight Premium issues per year. For each Premium issue, your account balance will be charged an additional fee up to $4.49, in the billing period when the section publishes. This will result in shortening the length of your billing period. Future Premium issues may include: New LA Times Food 1/8/23, Festival of Books 4/16/23, 101 California Best 5/21/23, Ultimate Consumer Guide to Streaming 6/18/23, Boiling Point 8/6/23, De Los Latino 10/1/23, Holiday Gift Guide 11/19/23, 101 Best Restaurants 12/10/23. Dates and titles are subject to change without notice. Subscriptions with a Thurs. delivery, include 24 special issues of The Envelope via USPS with 2 issues in Jan., 5 in Feb., 2 in May, 4 in June, 3 in Aug., 1 in Oct., 3 in Nov. and 5 in Dec.

Printed with soy-based ink on recycled newsprint from wood byproducts.

KOEN VAN WEEL Pool Photo

FORMER president of Kosovo Hashim Thaci, with headphones, is on trial on war crimes charges in the Kosovo Specialist Chambers. "I am fully not guilty," he said.

'Nobody is above the law': Ex-Kosovo leader on trial

BY MIKE CORDER

THE HAGUE — An international prosecutor declared Monday that "nobody is above the law," as the trial opened for Kosovo's former president and three other defendants on charges including murder and torture in a case that their supporters say is unjustly targeting revered freedom fighters.

Hashim Thaci resigned from office in 2020 to defend himself against the charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes committed during his country's 1998-99 war for independence from Serbia.

"I am fully not guilty," Thaci, who went by the nickname the Snake during the war, told judges at the Kosovo Specialist Chambers as the trial opened. The other three defendants also repeated not guilty pleas made at earlier pretrial hearings.

The case has stirred an outpouring of support from across the political spectrum in Kosovo. On Sunday, thousands of people took to the streets to show their support for the defendants. Many Kosovars consider the Netherlands-based court an injustice and view it as an attempt to rewrite the history of their struggle for independence.

Prosecutor Alex Whiting said the Kosovo Liberation Army, a guerrilla force that battled against the powerful Serbian military, had "a very clear and explicit policy of targeting collaborators and perceived traitors including political opponents."

Whiting said prosecutors would prove that the KLA was responsible for hundreds of murders and illegal detentions across Kosovo and northern Albania in 1998 and 1999 and that the four accused are responsible for those crimes as military leaders of the KLA general staff.

"Most of the victims of the accused were fellow Kosovar Albanians. In their zeal to target and eliminate those persons they deemed to be opponents, the accused endorsed and implemented a policy that often victimized their own," Whiting said, adding that the trial was about key defending principles.

"Nobody is above the law, even during wartime," he added.

Whiting has led the prosecution office preparing the case against Thaci since late last year. He replaced Jack Smith, who was named a U.S. Justice Department special counsel in November to oversee investigations into former President Trump's retention of hundreds of classified documents at his Florida home, as well as efforts by Trump and his allies to overturn the results of the 2020 U.S. presidential election. Both investigations are pending and have not resulted in criminal charges.

As the trial opened, hundreds of supporters of Thaci and the other defendants gathered near The Hague's central railway station. Many waved flags and banners, including one that read: "Don't equal victims with the criminals!" Another proclaimed: "KLA fought for freedom."

Vullnet Guri, who traveled from Switzerland to join the demonstration, told the Associated Press: "We are protesting here for liberation of our fighters, they fight actually only for our freedom, and it is a big injustice to put them in the same quality of the Serbian army that made genocide in our country."

Prosecution lawyer Clare Lawson stressed that the KLA itself was not in the dock.

"The KLA is not on trial. The liberation war waged by the KLA is not on trial. These four accused are on trial in respect of their personal responsibility for crimes committed against persons who they viewed as opponents, a majority of whom were, in fact, their fellow Kosovo Albanians," she said. "In their bid for supremacy, they entrenched a climate of fear pitting neighbor against neighbor, a climate which still persists today."

Lawyers for Thaci and the other defendants are scheduled to deliver opening statements Tuesday. The first witnesses are expected to testify next week.

Defense lawyers are expected to argue that the KLA was a loosely organized guerrilla force and that the defendants had little control over local fighters and cannot be held responsible for the actions of others.

In their opening statement, prosecutors sought to refute that claim.

"Each of the four accused wielded power, authority and influence, which enabled them to implement the common criminal purpose charged and exercise effective control," prosecution lawyer Matt Halling told judges.

Though based in the Netherlands, the court hearing the case is part of Kosovo's legal system.

Thaci is standing trial along with Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi for offenses that accusers say were committed across Kosovo and northern Albania from 1998 to September 1999, during and after the war.

Most of the 13,000 people who died in the 1998-1999 war in Kosovo were ethnic Albanians. A 78-day campaign of North Atlantic Treaty Organization airstrikes against Serbian forces ended the fighting. About 1 million ethnic Albanian Kosovars were driven from their homes.

The court in the Hague and a linked prosecutor's office were created after a 2011 report by the Council of Europe, a human rights body, that included allegations that KLA fighters trafficked human organs taken from prisoners and killed Serbs and fellow ethnic Albanians. The organ harvesting allegations weren't included in the indictment against Thaci.

In 2008, Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia, a move that Belgrade refuses to recognize. The United States and most of the West recognize the declaration, but Serbia — supported by allies Russia and China — does not. Kosovo-Serbia relations remain tense.

Corder writes for the Associated Press. AP writer Eric Tucker in Washington contributed to this report.

A novice will lead Montenegro

Economic expert, 36, beats an incumbent in power for more than three decades.

BY PREDRAG MILIC

RISTO BOZOVIC Associated Press

JAKOV Milatovic, center left, celebrates Sunday at his headquarters in Podgorica, Montenegro's capital.

PODGORICA, Montenegro — Economic expert and political novice Jakov Milatovic won Montenegro's presidential runoff election Sunday, defeating the pro-Western incumbent who has been in power for more than three decades, the candidates and polls said.

Milatovic, who is backed by Montenegro's governing majority, won around 60% of the vote Sunday and President Milo Djukanovic won around 40%, according to predictions released by the usually reliable Center for Monitoring and Research and based on voting samples.

In a victory speech, Milatovic described the moment as "historic" for Montenegro and promised to help lead the small NATO member nation into the European Union during his five-year term in office.

"Tonight is the night that we waited for the past 30 years," said Milatovic, blasting Djukanovic as the "last dictator in Europe."

"We want to deal with issues that are of vital importance: the rule of law, economy and European integration," Milatovic said. "We are leaving the past behind and making a decisive step into the future. This is a historic day for us."

Djukanovic conceded defeat and congratulated Milatovic on his victory. He said he was proud of the results he had achieved during such a long period in power.

"Montenegro has chosen and I respect that choice," Djukanovic said. "Elections are sometimes won — we won for a very long time — sometimes you lose. I wish [for] the new president that he be worthy of the trust he received."

The state election authorities Sunday evening said turnout was nearly 70%.

Analysts said that the results could shift slightly as the vote count progresses but that the gap between the two is too wide for a major change.

"This result is an indicator that the final result won't be substantially different," said analyst Ana Nenezic.

Milatovic's victory is believed to reflect voter fatigue with Djukanovic, who has served multiple times as both president and prime minister in the past decades, and disillusionment with established politicians. Milatovic, 36, entered politics in 2020 after earning his education in Britain and the United States.

Djukanovic is credited with leading his country to independence from Serbia in 2006 and defying Russia to steer Montenegro into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 2017. But critics say Djukanovic and his Democratic Party of Socialists, or DPS, have let crime and corruption engulf society.

The Democratic Party of Socialists was ousted from power in a 2020 parliamentary vote, but Djukanovic has remained in office until the end of his five-year mandate. His defeat Sunday means that both he and his party will be in opposition for the first time since the late 1980s.

Milatovic's supporters took to the streets of Montenegrin cities as the outcome became clear, setting off fireworks and honking horns as they drove around the streets. Hundreds gathered outside the main church in Podgorica, the capital, reflecting the ruling coalition's close ties with the Serbian Orthodox Church and Serbia.

The Serbian Orthodox Church played an important role in the protest movement that eventually resulted in the DPS' removal from power in 2020. Many Montenegrins identify themselves as Serbs and support improving relations with Serbia.

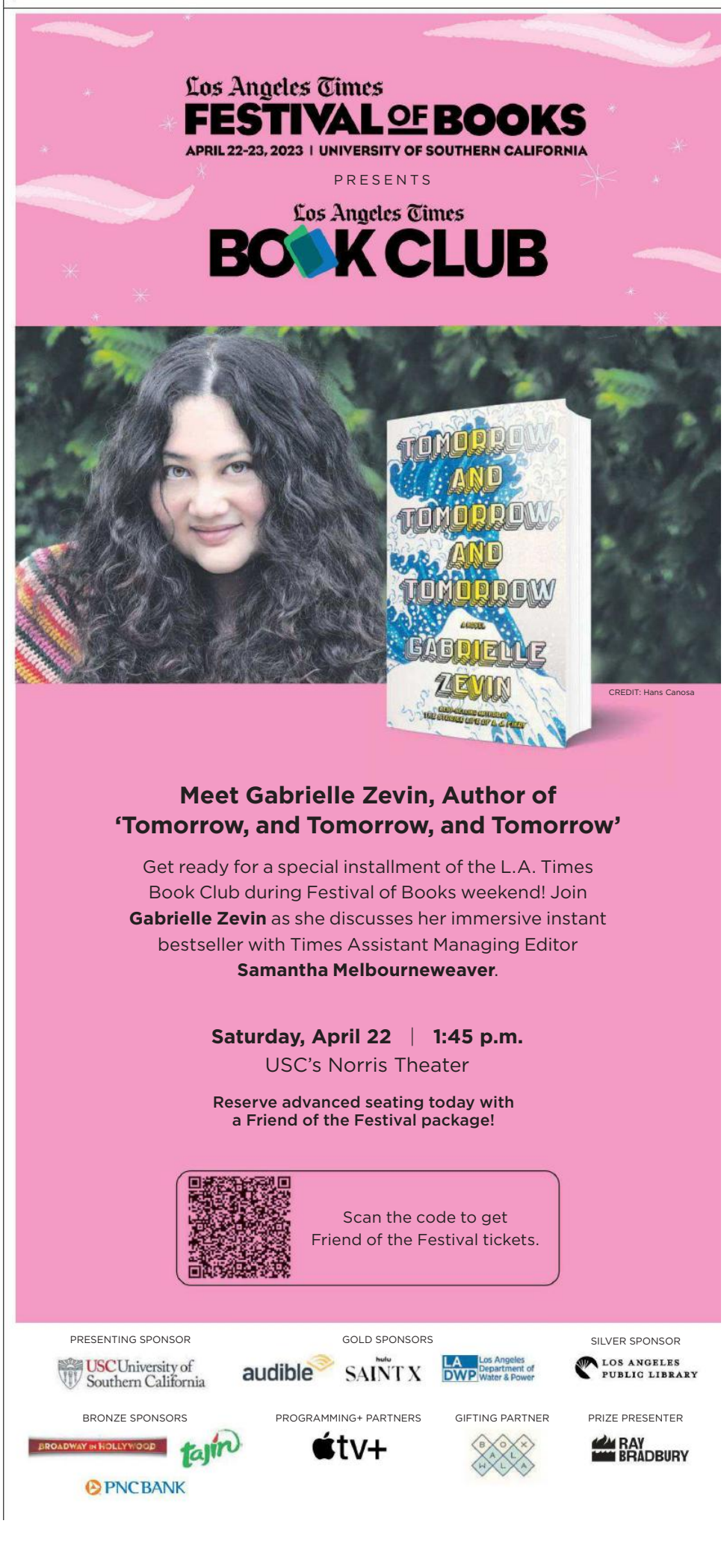
Sunday's runoff was scheduled after none of the contenders won a majority in the first round of voting two weeks ago. Some 540,000 people were eligible to vote. Montenegro has a population of 620,000 and borders Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo and the Adriatic Sea.

The outcome of Sunday's election is likely to influence an early parliamentary election set for June 11. That vote was scheduled because of a months-long government deadlock that stalled Montenegro's pending European Union membership and alarmed the West as war rages in Ukraine.

Milatovic's Europe Now movement could find itself in a position to dominate the next government after the June election. Milatovic's presidential candidacy won the backing of a shaky ruling coalition — which Europe Now is not a part of — that includes parties in favor of closer ties with Serbia and Russia.

Milatovic has denied Djukanovic's accusations that the ruling coalition is pushing Montenegro back under Serbia's influence.

Milic writes for the Associated Press.


Los Angeles Times
FESTIVAL OF BOOKS
APRIL 22-23, 2023 | UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
PRESENTS
Los Angeles Times
BOOK CLUB
TOMORROW, AND TOMORROW, AND TOMORROW
GABRIELLE ZEVIN
CREDIT: Hans Canosa
Meet Gabrielle Zevin, Author of 'Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow'
Get ready for a special installment of the L.A. Times Book Club during Festival of Books weekend! Join Gabrielle Zevin as she discusses her immersive instant bestseller with Times Assistant Managing Editor Samantha Melbourneweaver.
Saturday, April 22 | 1:45 p.m.
USC's Norris Theater
Reserve advanced seating today with a Friend of the Festival package!
Scan the code to get Friend of the Festival tickets.
PRESENTING SPONSOR
USC University of Southern California
GOLD SPONSORS
audible
hulu SAINT X
LA DWP Los Angeles Department of Water & Power
SILVER SPONSOR
LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY
BRONZE SPONSORS
BROADWAY IN HOLLYWOOD
tajin
PNC BANK
PROGRAMMING+ PARTNERS
tv+
GIFTING PARTNER
PRIZE PRESENTER
RAY BRADBURY

Parisians say 'non' to e-scooters

Following a citywide referendum, the rental fleet will be gone by the 2024 Olympics.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PARIS — Parisians who voted Sunday in a citywide referendum overwhelmingly chose to banish for-hire electric scooters from the French capital's streets.

The 15,000 scooters available for rent in central Paris, which have divided public opinion, are expected to vanish at the end of August, when the city's contracts with three operators expire.

The simple question asked of voters Sunday was: "For or against self-service scooters in Paris?"

The result wasn't close, but turnout was extremely low. City Hall said slightly more than 103,000 people voted, with 89% rejecting e-scooters and 11% supporting them.

Mayor Anne Hidalgo hailed the consultative referendum as a success and said its outcome was "very clear."

"There will no longer be any self-service scooters in Paris from Sept. 1," she said.

The referendum had been open to all of Paris' 1.38 million registered voters. The turnout of just 7.4% has been criticized by the scooter companies.

"This unprecedented referendum ... was heavily impacted by very restrictive voting methods. This led to an extremely low turnout, heavily skewed towards older age groups, which has widened the gap between pros and cons," said a joint statement from Lime, Dott and Tier.

"It is a step back for sustainable transport in Paris ahead of the 2024 Olympics," the companies added.

Scattered around Paris, easy to hire with a downloadable app and relatively cheap, the scooters have been a hit with tourists who love their speed and convenience.

In the five years since their introduction — following that of shared cars and shared bicycles — for-hire scooters have also built a following among some Parisians who don't want or can't afford their own but like the option of avoiding the Metro and other public transportation.

But many Parisians complain that e-scooters are an eyesore and a traffic menace. Scooters have been involved in hundreds of accidents, some fatal.

Hidalgo and some of her deputies campaigned to banish the "free-floating" flotilla — so called because scooters are picked up and dropped off around town, at renters' whims — describing them as a public nuisance and citing issues related to safety and environmental cost-benefit analysis. They aimed to implement the ban before the capital hosts the Summer Games next year.

‘Asphyxia with restraints’ cited in Otieno’s death

Virginia man, 28, died in a mental hospital by homicide, the state’s chief medical examiner concludes.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

RICHMOND, Va. — Irvo Otieno, a 28-year-old whose death last month at a Virginia mental hospital has sparked outrage and led to charges of second-degree murder against 10 defendants, died of “positional and mechanical asphyxia with restraints,” a medical examiner’s office said Monday.

Arkuie Williams, the administrative deputy in the state office of the chief medical examiner, confirmed the findings to the Associated Press after attorneys for Otieno’s family shared them in a statement. The manner of death was homicide, Williams wrote in an email.

Otieno died March 6 after he was pinned to the floor while being admitted to Central State Hospital in Dinwiddie County.

Video released last month showed sheriff’s deputies and hospital employees restraining a handcuffed and shackled Otieno for about 20 minutes after he was forcibly led into a hospital room. For much of that time, Otieno, who was Black, was prone on the floor, pinned by a group so large it blocked the camera’s view of him at times.

EVA RUSSO Richmond Times-Dispatch

IRVO OTIENO is laid to rest Wednesday in North Chesterfield, Va. He was in shackles and handcuffs when he was pinned to the floor by sheriff’s deputies and others. Ten people face second-degree murder charges.

Personnel who realized that he appeared limp and lifeless eventually began resuscitation efforts, the video showed. Otieno’s family and their attorneys have said he posed no danger and was simply trying to breathe.

“The official cause and manner of death is not surprising to us as it corroborates what the world witnessed in the video,” family attorneys Ben Crump and Mark Krudys said in a statement. “In a chilling parallel to George Floyd’s killing, Irvo was held down and excessively restrained to death, when he should have been provided medical help and compassion. It is tragic that yet another life has been lost to this malicious and deadly restraint technique.”

Seven deputies and three hospital workers have been charged with second-degree murder in Otieno’s death.

The local prosecutor who brought the charges has previously said in court that Otieno was smothered to death.

No additional information from the autopsy can be released by the medical examiner’s office, Williams said.

The Rev. Al Sharpton and other speakers at Otieno’s funeral Wednesday said his death shows the need for mental health and policing reforms.

Otieno was first taken into police custody March 3, when he was taken to a local hospital for mental health treatment under an emergency custody order.

His family and their attorneys have said he was experiencing mental distress at the time of his initial encounter with law enforcement, days before he was taken to the state hospital.

Police have said that while at the local hospital, Otieno “became physically assaultive toward officers,” at which point they arrested him and took him to a local jail; his family says this should never have happened given that he was in need of treatment. On the afternoon of March 6, he was transferred to the state hospital, which has a unit that cares for people admitted from jails or by court order.

Some of the attorneys for those charged in the death have said their clients were trying to restrain Otieno.

All defendants have been granted bond. Court records show pretrial hearings in April or May.

Nashville police: School shooter planned attack for months

BY TRAVIS LOLLER, JONATHAN MATTISE AND KIMBERLEE KRUESI

NASHVILLE — As students across Nashville walked out of class Monday to protest gun violence at the Tennessee Capitol following a school shooting last week, police said the person who killed six people, including three 9-year-olds, had been planning the massacre for months.

Police have not established a motive for the shootings at the Covenant School, a small Christian elementary school where the 28-year-old shooter was once a student, according to a Monday news release from the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department.

Nashville police and FBI agents continue to review writings left behind by Audrey Hale, both in Hale’s vehicle and home, police said.

“It is known that Hale considered the actions of other mass murderers,” police said.

The three children who were killed were Evelyn Dieckhaus, Hallie Scruggs and William Kinney. The three adults were Katherine Koonce, 60, the head of the school, custodian Mike Hill, 61, and substitute teacher Cynthia Peak, 61.

GEORGE WALKER IV Associated Press

STUDENTS walked out of classes Monday in Nashville to rally at the Capitol in protest of gun violence.

Hale fired 152 rounds before being killed by police. That included 126 rifle rounds and 26 9-millimeter rounds, police said.

Outside the state Capitol on Monday, thousands rallied for gun reform, many of them students from Nashville-area schools who walked out of their classes en masse. Some other students sat outside the House speaker’s office in the legislative building.

The crowd outside the Capitol echoed chants such as “thoughts and prayers are not enough” and sang along to songs like “All You Need is Love” — adding to it, “and action!” At one point, they sat for a moment of silence, raising posters above their heads that read, “Thoughts and prayers are useless to dead children,” “Book bags not body bags,” and “2nd graders over 2nd amendment.”

Vivian Carlson, a senior at Hume-Fogg High School nearby in downtown Nashville, helped organize her school’s walkout. She told the crowd that her biggest fear last week, when the shooting unfolded, should have been “missing the bus or my stepmom scolding me for not cleaning the cat litter box.” Instead, she said she was missing English class Monday because politicians are “protecting old laws for a new society.”

Carlson, like many others who addressed the crowd, called for changes to Tennessee’s gun laws, including a ban on assault weapons, tougher background checks and a “red flag” law. Red flag laws generally allow law enforcement to temporarily confiscate weapons from people whose statements or behavior are deemed to make them a danger to themselves or others.

“To my fellow students, we cannot let this pressure and fire escape us,” Carlson said. “Feel the fear as you walk into school and let it inspire you to fight for change. And please, if there is one thing you can do, I beg you to vote.”

Tennessee’s Republican governor and supermajority Republican Legislature have moved to loosen gun laws in recent years. The same day as the Covenant shooting, a federal judge quietly cleared the way to drop the minimum age for Tennesseans to carry handguns publicly without a permit to 18 — just two years after a new law set the age at 21.

As thousands swarmed the Capitol, Gov. Bill Lee and state lawmakers held a news conference nearby to unveil legislative proposals that would add more funding for school security officers and mental health resources.

The proposals included $140 million to place an armed security guard at every public school, as well as $27 million to enhance public and private school security. Lee is also proposing adding $30 million to expand the state’s homeland security network that will work with both public and private schools.

The governor’s proposals must now clear the Legislature as lawmakers are in their final weeks of the session.

Notably absent from Lee’s announcement were any calls to tighten the state’s access to guns. As he stood surrounded by top Republican leaders, Lee said he believed that people who are a threat to themselves should not have access to weapons but also stated that any law designed to address those concerns shouldn’t impede 2nd Amendment rights.

He called on the Legislature to find the appropriate solution. Yet that call to action may be short-lived after Sen. Todd Gardenhire, who chairs the influential Senate Judiciary Committee, told reporters that he has no plans to consider any new gun-related bills this session.

“We all agree that we should all find something that we agree upon,” Lee said. “I think we can do that and I think we should do that.”

Lee added that he had not talked to Gardenhire about his stance on halting new gun legislation.

An AP investigation last year found that most U.S. states barely use the red flag laws touted as the most powerful tool to stop gun violence before it happens. It’s a trend experts blame on a lack of awareness of the laws and resistance by some authorities to enforce them even as shootings and gun deaths soar.

Even after the main rally ended Monday, hundreds of protesters remained at the Capitol as lawmakers went into the House and Senate chambers for their evening sessions. Many protesters made their way inside the building, where they sang “This Little Light of Mine” before erupting into chants, “Save our kids!”

Police have said Hale was under a doctor’s care for an undisclosed “emotional disorder.” However, authorities haven’t disclosed a link between that care and the shooting.

Police also said Hale was not on their radar before the attack.

Social media accounts and other sources indicate that the shooter identified as a man and might have recently begun using the first name Aiden.

Police have said Hale “was assigned female at birth” but used masculine pronouns on a social media profile. However, police have continued to use female pronouns and the name Audrey to describe Hale.

Loller, Mattise and Kruesli write for the Associated Press.

Teacher shot by 6-year-old boy files $40-million lawsuit

BY DENISE LAVOIE

RICHMOND, Va. — A first-grade Virginia teacher who was shot and seriously wounded by one of her 6-year-old students filed a lawsuit Monday seeking $40 million in damages from school officials, accusing them of gross negligence for allegedly ignoring multiple warnings on the day of the shooting that the boy had a gun and was in a “violent mood.”

Abby Zwerner, a 25-year-old teacher at Richneck Elementary School in Newport News, Va., was shot in the hand and chest Jan. 6 as she sat at a reading table in her classroom. She spent nearly two weeks in a hospital and has had four surgeries since the shooting.

The shooting rattled the military-shipbuilding community and sent shock waves around the country, with many wondering how a child so young could get access to a gun and shoot his teacher.

The lawsuit names as defendants the Newport News School Board, former Supt. George Parker III, former Richneck Principal Briana Foster Newton and former Richneck Assistant Principal Ebony Parker.

No one, including the boy, has been charged in the shooting. The superintendent was fired by the school board after the shooting, and the assistant principal resigned. A school district spokesperson has said that Newton is still employed by the school district but declined to say what position she holds.

After the shooting, the board voted to install metal detectors in every school in the district, beginning with Richneck, and to purchase clear backpacks for all students.

In the lawsuit, Zwerner’s attorneys say all of the defendants knew the boy “had a history of random violence” at school and at home, including an episode the year before, when he “strangled and choked” his kindergarten teacher.

“All Defendants knew that John Doe attacked students and teachers alike, and his motivation to injure was directed toward anyone in his path, both in and out of school, and was not limited to teachers while at the school,” the lawsuit states, using a pseudonym for the boy.

School officials had removed the boy from Richneck and sent him to another school for the remainder of the kindergarten year but allowed him to return for first grade in the fall of 2022, the lawsuit states. He was placed on a modified schedule “because he was chasing students around the playground with a belt in an effort to whip them with it,” and was cursing staff and teachers, it says. Under the modified schedule, one of the boy’s parents was required to accompany him during the school day.

Associated Press

ABBY ZWERNER has had four surgeries since being shot and wounded.

“Teachers’ concerns with John Doe’s behavior [were] regularly brought to the attention of Richneck Elementary School administration, and the concerns were always dismissed,” the lawsuit states. Often after he was taken to the office, “he would return to class shortly thereafter with some type of reward, such as a piece of candy,” according to the lawsuit.

The boy’s parents did not agree to put him in special education classes where he would be with other students with behavioral issues, the lawsuit states.

The lawsuit describes a series of warnings that school employees gave administrators in the hours before the shooting, beginning with Zwerner, who went to the office of Ebony Parker between 11:15 and 11:30 a.m. and told her the boy “was in a violent mood,” had threatened to beat up a kindergartner and had stared down a security officer in the lunchroom.

The lawsuit alleges that Parker “had no response, refusing even to look up at [Zwerner] when she expressed her concerns.”

About 11:45 a.m., two students told Amy Kovac, a reading specialist, that the boy had a gun in his backpack. The boy denied it but refused to provide his backpack to Kovac, the lawsuit states.

Zwerner told Kovac that she had seen the boy take something out of his backpack and put it into the pocket of his sweatshirt. Kovac then searched the backpack but did not find a weapon.

Kovac told Ebony Parker that the boy had told students he had a gun. Parker responded that his “pockets were too small to hold a handgun and did nothing,” the lawsuit states.

Another first-grade boy, who was crying, told a teacher that the boy “had shown him a firearm he had in his pocket during recess.” That teacher then contacted the office and informed a music teacher who answered the phone.

The music teacher said that, when he informed Parker, she said the backpack had already been searched and “took no further action,” according to the lawsuit. A guidance counselor then went to Parker’s office and asked permission to search the boy for a gun, but Parker forbade him from doing so, “and stated that John Doe’s mother would be arriving soon to pick him up,” it states.

About an hour later, the boy pulled the gun out of his pocket, aimed it at Zwerner and shot her, the lawsuit states.

Zwerner suffered permanent injuries, physical pain, mental anguish, lost earnings and other damages, the lawsuit states.

Last month, Newport News prosecutor Howard Gwynn said his office would not criminally charge the boy because he is too young to understand the legal system and what a charge means. Gwynn has yet to decide if any adults will be charged.

Lavoie writes for the Associated Press.

Threat of 'big melt' in record snowpack

[**Snowpack,** from A1]
a succession of historic blizzards and more than a dozen atmospheric river storms that began pummeling the state at the start of the year. The storms replenished rivers and reservoirs and dropped piles of snow across the state, but they also caused widespread flooding, levee breaches and nearly three dozen deaths.

The abundance of water allowed state and federal agencies to drastically increase allocations for water providers across the state and prompted Gov. Gavin Newsom to roll back some of his drought emergency restrictions, which were issued in 2021 amid the state's driest three years on record.

But though the U.S. Drought Monitor and other indicators of dryness are significantly improved, it is possible to have too much of a good thing, experts said.

With only a few more days of chilly weather on the horizon, conditions are expected to be warm and dry across much of the state in the coming weeks. That includes the San Joaquin Valley, the Owens Valley and slopes of the southern Sierra.

"As that record southern Sierra snowpack melts in the days and weeks to come — and it is going to do that between now and June — most of it is going to melt and flow downhill," Swain said.

The rushing water could fill some of the region's smaller reservoirs "multiple times over, which means that essentially, those reservoir operators are going to have to release water continuously, [with] potentially high flows, to maintain safety margins in these reservoirs and these dams," he said.

How high those flows will get, and what their ultimate effects are, will largely depend on how quickly temperatures rise.

In "normal" years, snowpack melts gradually through the spring, feeding rivers, nourishing plants and refilling reservoirs that are designed to store water through the dry months of summer.

But rapid melting brought on by an early-season heat wave — or even just a warm, humid air mass — could swamp areas already coping with flooding.

Portions of the San Joaquin Valley were inundated with so much floodwater during the recent storms that the once-dry Tulare Lake has begun to reemerge.

Similar flooding occurred in the San Joaquin Valley and Tulare Lake Basin after the winters of 1969 and 1983, Swain said.

Five of the largest reservoirs in the Tulare Basin are at an average of 67% capacity, according to state data. And unlike the Sacramento and San Joaquin River basins, the Tulare Basin does not flow into the ocean.

Although some of the melting snow will seep into the ground or be lost to evaporation, it will still contribute to a sudden surge in rivers.

"The real challenge as we move into spring and summer is flooding — significant flooding — particularly in the Tulare Lake Basin," Department of Water Resources Director Karla Nemeth said. She added that officials will be transitioning from snow measurements to runoff measurements in the weeks ahead to help water and flood managers prepare.

"There is variability — it does depend how quickly California warms up as to how quickly we will experience the snowmelt," she said, "but we are into those longer daylight hours, which can trigger snowmelt at a much more rapid pace."

Newsom on Friday issued an executive order to help prepare the Tulare Basin for potential flooding, including efforts geared toward response and recovery.

State officials and experts have attributed the record winter precipitation to "climate whiplash": the abrupt change from periods of prolonged drought to shorter periods of heavy precipitation due in part to climate change. Dry conditions will return again, they said.

"Even though we have this extraordinary snowpack, we know that the droughts are getting deeper and more frequent and that means we have to use water efficiently no matter what our hydrologic conditions," Nemeth said.

She added that despite a surface water surplus, groundwater supplies remain depleted, particularly in the Central Valley. It is possible that residents there could experience simultaneous drought and flood conditions, she said.

John Abatzoglou, a climatologist at UC Merced, said "it's the California story."

"We see that throughout the tree ring record. That sort of tempo has always been there," Abatzoglou said. "There's no bet that we'll continue to see wet years after this, and odds are the next drought is around the corner."

But state water managers have also been criticized for their handling of the year's abundant water, and they've acknowledged they must do more to capture supplies as the snow melts.

Jeanine Jones, the Department of Water Resources' interstate resource manager, pointed to recent executive orders facilitating groundwater recharge, including diverting more than 600,000 acre-feet from the swollen San Joaquin River to areas where it could spread and percolate into the aquifer beneath the valley.

There is a "big effort to try to get as much of that floodwater as possible someplace underground, particularly knowing that we have a few months, probably, in the runoff season to do that," she said.

The potential for spring flooding extends beyond the Central Valley, with officials in Southern California also concerned about the melt. Though areas like Los Angeles will probably be spared because of a lack of nearby snowpack, its water infrastructure could be at risk.

The Los Angeles Aqueduct — which draws water from the Owens Valley and delivers it to millions of people in L.A. — was already undermined this spring when floodwaters caused a 120-foot section of the structure to crumble. It was the first time the aqueduct has ever been breached by extreme weather.

Officials from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power said during a board meeting last week that crews were working hard to repair the aqueduct but must also brace for the incoming runoff.

"I'm concerned about what we'll see the next few weeks and months as snow begins to melt, and want to make sure that we are as proactive as we can be — not just in terms of the work that we're doing, but also in terms of preparing the public," said Cynthia McClain-Hill, president of the DWP board.

McClain-Hill said the region's previously strained water systems "dodged a bullet" thanks to the recent precipitation, which allowed state and local officials to replenish drained reservoirs and boost supplies.

But sometimes, she said, "we can't stop the water — and the potential for damage, or flooding, or other eventualities that could be problematic."

Benjamin Hatchett, an assistant research professor at the Desert Research Institute who recently published a study on California's declining snowpack, said it's in everyone's best interest if it melts slowly and fills up reservoirs as the water is used for irrigation.

"Now we wait patiently to see how quickly or not quickly it comes out of the mountains," Hatchett said. "It's like a rock on the edge of a cliff, and one gust of wind is all it takes to knock it down."

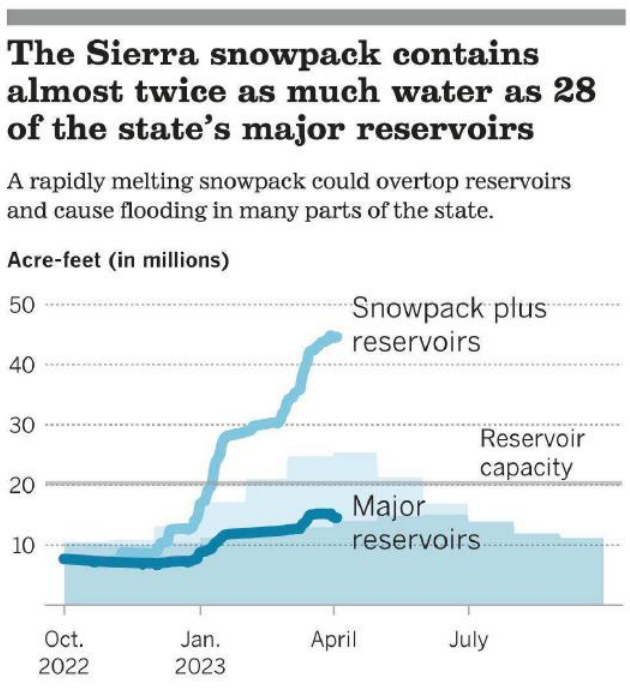
Photographs by GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times

THIS SIDEWALK is surrounded by snow berms at Cerro Coso Community College in Mammoth Lakes.

DRIVERS on Highway 395 are treated to a wintry scene of snow in all directions.

The Sierra snowpack contains almost twice as much water as 28 of the state's major reservoirs

A rapidly melting snowpack could overtop reservoirs and cause flooding in many parts of the state.



Shaded areas show normal snowpack-plus-reservoir and reservoir levels, calculated as a 30-year average between 1990 and 2020. Data as of April 3.

California Department of Water Resources; Times analysis

SEAN GREENE Los Angeles Times

New York says it's ready for Trump's day in court

[**Trump,** from A1]
2016 campaign, and mark the first time in history that a former U.S. president has been criminally prosecuted.

The indictments, the details of which are expected to be revealed Tuesday, come as Trump is facing separate investigations into his alleged involvement in 2020 election interference by his supporters and the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol, along with his handling of classified documents after leaving office.

Greene called for Bragg's arrest on Twitter on March 22, alleging without evidence that the prosecutor was "breaking the law and trying to incite civil unrest."

On Friday, the congresswoman announced on Twitter that she would be heading to New York and urged Trump's supporters to "protest the unconstitutional WITCH HUNT."

Trump also called for protests as news of a possible indictment first surfaced in mid-March, but his calls have not seemed to attract a large crowd so far. Still, the fear of the possibility of violence continued to be a concern.

Adams singled out Greene — an extremist and conspiracy theorist — during Monday's news conference.

"Although we have no specific threats, people like Marjorie Taylor Greene, who is known to spread misinformation and hate speech, she stated she's coming to town," Adams said, before issuing a message to the congresswoman and protesters: "While you're in town, be on your best behavior."

Greene responded to Adams' comments on Twitter, and said the mayor was "trying to intimidate, threaten and stop me from using my 1st amendment rights."

Adams and Sewell declined to offer specifics as to how many police officers would be deployed across the city, but Sewell said the department was ready to pivot with officers if their presence was needed.

By Monday, multiple layers of fences and barriers had been placed in and around Trump Tower while traffic continued to flow outside.

Trump's motorcade arrived at Trump Tower at about 4 p.m. Eastern time, as news helicopters hovered overhead and camera crews waited outside for the former president.

News cameras captured Trump waving as he walked quickly inside.

Peter Donald, former assistant commissioner for the New York Police Department and founder of communications agency Arena, said the NYPD was one of the country's most sophisticated policing agencies and would gather intelligence from an array of individuals and entities.

"They're going to have both plainclothes and in-uniform police officers out and about," he said. "They are are going to have other types of technology deployed, including video cameras, gunshot detection equipment, radiological sensors and kind of every tool you can think of, in addition to aviation."

Historically, the NYPD looks at similar situations from several angles, including the possibility of "lone actors" or small groups that "might be operating off the grid, without connectivity to networks," and larger groups that may be attempting to disrupt, he said. "They think through every possible scenario."

In addition to monitoring any possible safety threats Tuesday, Sewell said the department had provided "additional assistance" to secure the safety of the district attorney.

"We take any threats or concerns for our elected officials very seriously, so we have provided some assistance in that regard, and we are investigating any threats that may be made to the D.A. or any of his staff," she said.

City officials also urged people to use public transit, warning that Tuesday's court hearing and possible protests would bring significant traffic to the area.

Sewell said there would be rolling street closures throughout Manhattan to facilitate Trump's travel from Trump Tower to court, where he is expected to be arraigned at 2:15 p.m. She said some streets near the two locations would probably be closed all of Tuesday to facilitate Trump's arrival and exit, but Sewell and a spokesperson for the department declined to offer specifics.

Sewell said a "healthy number of officers" would also be dispatched to the city's subways to ensure safety.

JOHN MINCHILLO Associated Press

SECURITY FORCES gather at the New York courthouse where former President Trump will be arraigned Tuesday. Rolling street closures were expected.

Los Angeles Times

BUSINESS

Activision is 'suppressing' esports pay, U.S. says

Justice Department files antitrust suit against the video game giant over player compensation.

By Brian Contreras

The Department of Justice on Monday announced a civil antitrust lawsuit against the video game giant Activision Blizzard, alleging that the Santa Monicacompany limited competition among esports players in its professional "Overwatch" and "Call of Duty" leagues.

"Professional esports players — like all workers — deserve the benefits of competition for their services," Assistant Atty. Gen. Jonathan Kanter said in a statement. "Activision's conduct prevented that from happening."

Microsoft is set to acquire Activision Blizzard for $69 billion — a deal that recently cleared several regulatory hurdles on its path toward closure.

The Justice Department's complaint said that the independently owned teams that competed in the two Activision leagues agreed to a "competitive balance tax" that "effectively operated as a salary cap." This, the complaint said, violated the Sherman Antitrust Act by limiting competition in the league and suppressing players' pay.

"Teams were fined if their total player compensation exceeded a threshold set by Activision each year," the complaint said. "For every dollar a team spent over that threshold, Activision would fine the team one dollar and distribute the collected sum pro rata to all non-offending teams in the league."

After a Justice Department investigation into the tax, according to the document, Activision told teams in late 2021 that it would no longer enforce it. Still, "Activision should be enjoined from implementing the Competitive Balance Tax or any similar rule or restraint."

The complaint, filed Monday in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, was accompanied by a consent decree proposal that, if approved, "would prohibit Activision from imposing any rule that would, directly or indirectly, limit player compensation in any of Activision's professional esports leagues, or that would tax, fine, or otherwise penalize any team for exceeding a certain amount of compensation for its players."

That consent decree, if approved by the court, would also require the gaming company to certify that it didn't have competitive balance taxes in any of its esports leagues, as well as to notify esports teams and players of the final judgment.

Activision Blizzard spokesperson Delaney Simmons said in an email to The Times that the company has "reached a settlement over this issue."

"When we launched the 'Overwatch' and 'Call of Duty Leagues,' we wanted to create viable career opportunities for the players requiring minimum salaries and mandatory benefits as part of player contracts," the statement said. "As a league, we also wanted our products to be competitive, so we carefully designed and implemented the competitive balance tax."

The company maintains that the competitive balance tax was lawful and did not adversely affect player salaries. "The tax was never levied, and the leagues voluntarily dropped it from our rules in 2021," the company said.

The Justice Department's complaint is not the only legal snarl Activision Blizzard has faced in recent years.

In February, the company agreed to pay $35 million to settle allegations that it lacked systems for collecting employees' workplace misconduct complaints and had violated a whistleblower protection rule.

In 2022, after an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission lawsuit, Activision Blizzard agreed to set up an $18-million fund for employees who dealt with sexual harassment or discrimination. That was on top of employee walkouts and lawsuits over the company's culture.

The former California Department of Fair Employment and Housing at one point accused Activision's Blizzard division of a "pervasive frat boy workplace culture" and rampant pay discrimination.

The gaming industry and the competitive world of esports have grown in popularity in recent years, and — in the process — brought along major paydays for some.

According to industry researcher Newzoo, 2.9 billion people played video games in 2020, and that number could hit 3.6 billion by 2025. According to the trade group Entertainment Software Assn., Americans spent a total of $56.6 billion on gaming in 2022.

Gaming has growing cultural cachet too, including a recent spate of well-received Hollywood adaptations.

Allen J. Schaben Los Angeles Times

THE COMPLAINT was accompanied by a consent decree proposal that "would prohibit Activision from imposing any rule that would ... limit player compensation." Above, a walkout at Activision in Irvine in 2021.

State has safety net for Medi-Cal enrollees facing loss of benefits

By Jon Healey

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began in earnest, low-income Californians who enrolled in Medi-Cal — California's version of the government-funded Medicaid health insurance program — have been able to keep their coverage without having to prove every year that they still qualified for it.

That's because the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which President Trump signed into law in March 2020, offered states extra money if they stopped booting people off Medicaid. And all but a handful of states complied.

In December, though, Congress ended the "continuous coverage requirement" as of March 31, giving states 14 months to restart the annual eligibility checks and trim their Medicaid rolls. Some states plan to begin culling enrollees this month, although California won't start disqualifying people until July 1.

The risk, analysts say, is that many eligible people will be kicked off Medicaid because they didn't receive or didn't understand the state's request for information about their circumstances.

The Kaiser Family Foundation has estimated that 5 million to 14 million Americans will fall off the Medicaid rolls at least temporarily.

If you're on Medi-Cal (or caring for someone who is), keep an eye out for a letter from county officials asking for the information needed to determine your eligibility.

But don't panic if you don't receive one right away, said Louise Norris, a health policy analyst for healthinsurance.org; the state plans to spend more than a year on eligibility checks.

Here's an explanation of what's happening and what options current Medi-Cal enrollees will have.

Is the government cutting Medicaid?

Not exactly, although the changes happening now across the country will probably reduce the program's cost.

During the pandemic, the number of Medicaid enrollees swelled in California (by about 20%, to 15.5 million in December) and nationwide (by about 30%, to 92 million in November). The percentage of uninsured Americans dropped over that same period — a rare occurrence in the wake of an economic downturn.

The increase in Medicaid enrollees stemmed in part from the job losses and other economic disruptions caused by the response to the pandemic, but also from the pause in eligibility redeterminations.

Here's a good illustration. States allow women who are pregnant to qualify for Medicaid at higher income levels. According to the Commonwealth Fund, though, a new mother can lose her benefits a few months after giving birth if her income exceeds the lower limit for nonpregnant enrollees. In Texas, for example, the income limit for pregnant women is about twice the federal poverty level; for nonpregnant parents, the Commonwealth Fund says, it's 16% of the poverty line — "a level that disqualifies almost all adults." The COVID-19-era continuous coverage requirement let those mothers stay on Medicaid, but when that policy ends, their coverage will end too unless their income drops.

Medicaid's growth came at taxpayers' expense, given that Medicaid is jointly funded by federal and state governments. Total Medicaid costs rose 7% to 12% in each of the last three years as enrollment surged, the Kaiser Family Foundation estimated.

Checking eligibility again will bring the numbers down, in large part by excluding families whose current incomes are above the Medicaid limit. But it will also restart the costly and inefficient churning caused when qualified people are kicked off for failing to respond to a request for information about their income. That's been a consistent problem for Medicaid, analysts say, although its prevalence is hard to measure.

The California Department of Health Care Services estimates that 2 million to 3 million Medi-Cal enrollees could lose coverage as a result of income determinations — some because they no longer qualify, but many because the department has lost contact with them. Nationally, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that nearly 15 million people will lose Medicaid coverage, more than 40% of them because of "eligibility redetermination errors."

To try to reduce that number, the state is enlisting "DHCS Coverage Ambassadors" from diverse groups to try to reach Medi-Cal enrollees "in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways." If you're interested in becoming an ambassador, you can learn more about the program at the coverage ambassadors' English or Spanish websites.

Will millions go uninsured?

Potentially, yes.

Many who fall through the bureaucratic cracks will re-enroll automatically the next time they're in the hospital. The bigger effect, Norris said, will be on people who unwittingly lose their coverage, then get turned away trying to refill a prescription or at a doctor's appointment. They'll have to put off care until they successfully re-enroll.

That may seem like a minor inconvenience, but there are real costs, healthcare analysts say.

"Research shows that disruptions in Medicaid coverage are common and often lead to periods of uninsurance, delayed care, and less preventive care for beneficiaries," said a report from the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning. "Studies indicate that beneficiaries moving in and out of Medicaid coverage (sometimes called "churning") results in higher administrative costs, less predictable state expenditures, and higher monthly healthcare costs due to pent-up demand for healthcare services."

Many of the people who drop out of Medicaid because their income has increased will have another affordable option for coverage: subsidized policies sold on state Affordable Care Act exchanges. For those with incomes between 100% and 150% of the poverty line — $14,580 to $21,870 for a single individual, $30,000 to $45,000 for a family of four — monthly premiums can be at or near zero for a comprehensive policy with a reduced deductible and lower out-of-pocket costs.

In most states, Norris said, the onus will be on people who lose their Medicaid coverage to go out and find a new policy. But California is going one step further, she said, to try to keep people insured.

Under a 2019 state law, anyone who loses Medi-Cal coverage is automatically enrolled in Covered California's lowest-cost policy in the silver tier, which pays 70% of the healthcare costs incurred on average by an enrollee. The person will then have a month to accept the coverage and pay the premium (if there is one), change to a different health plan or drop the coverage altogether.

Switching out of Medi-Cal to a new plan could put you in a different network of hospitals, pharmacies and other healthcare providers, however. If your doctors accepted Medi-Cal, Norris said, don't assume they'll accept the insurance you get from Covered California — check the plan's provider network. If you want to keep your doctors, you may have to find a different Covered California plan.

There is one group of people who may have trouble finding affordable coverage if they lose Medi-Cal eligibility: immigrants in the country without permission. Unlike Medi-Cal, Covered California makes premium subsidies available only to citizens or lawful residents, as federal law requires.

California and 40 other states have smoothed the transition between public and private insurance coverage by expanding Medicaid eligibility to single adults, childless couples and people earning up to 138% of the federal poverty level. But in the nine states that have not expanded Medicaid, there is a large group of low-income residents who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but too little to qualify for subsidized insurance plans through the ACA, which are available only to people whose incomes are at or above the poverty line. For these Americans, health insurance will almost certainly be unaffordable.

What's happening in California?

The state plans to examine enrollees' eligibility gradually over the coming 14 months. People who enrolled in the month of June in any previous year would be up first for redetermination, with the decision taking effect July 1. The next group would be the people who enrolled in the month of July of any previous year, then the month of August, and so on.

For each group of enrollees, the redetermination process will start almost three months ahead of the day their coverage will end or be renewed. First, each county will try to determine their enrollees' eligibility based on the information that public agencies have already collected, a process that will work for about 25% of enrollees, the Department of Health Care Services estimates. Counties will then mail forms to the other 75%, asking for information about their income, expenses, savings and living situation.

That process will start in late April or early May for June enrollees. If enrollees don't respond or are deemed ineligible, Medi-Cal will send them a notice 10 days before terminating their coverage to give them a chance to ask for a hearing.

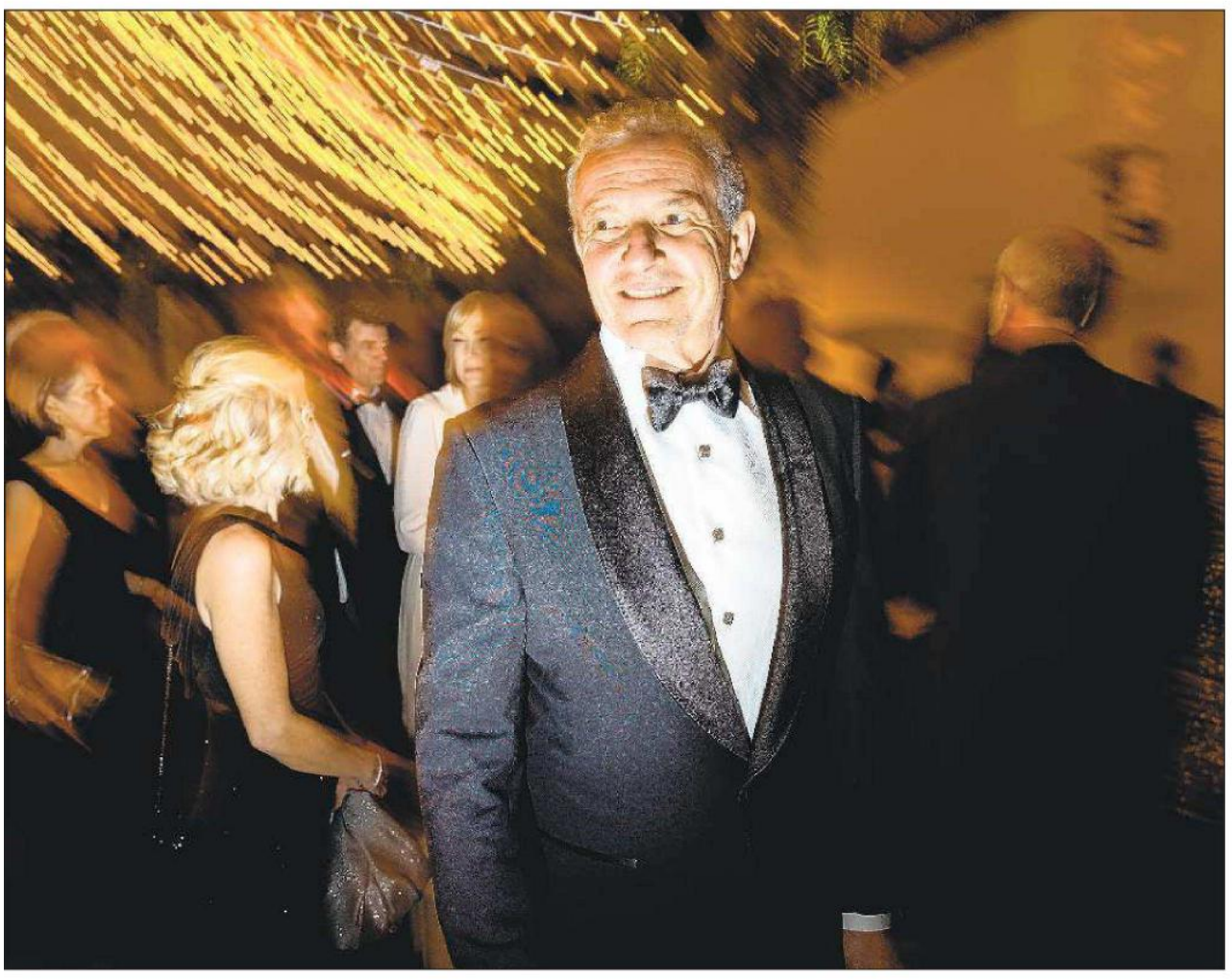
The state is urging Medi-Cal beneficiaries to make sure the program has their current contact information, including ways to reach them by mail, phone and email. "What you don't want to do," Norris said, "is ignore the problem and hope that it goes away."

The state operates two websites on which people can create accounts and update their contact information: BenefitsCal, which serves Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino and 42 other counties; and MyBenefitsCalWin, which serves Orange, Ventura, San Diego and 10 other counties.

You can also update your information through the county office that manages Medi-Cal. In Los Angeles, that's the Department of Public Social Services; its customer service center can be reached at (866) 613-3777.

Mark Boster Los Angeles Times

CALIFORNIA plans to examine enrollees' eligibility gradually over the coming 14 months. Above, Dr. Juan Montes examines a patient in his Whittier office in 2017.



JAY L. CLENDENIN Los Angeles Times

DISNEY Chief Executive Bob Iger, shown last month, told shareholders Monday that the company is Florida's largest taxpayer, employs more than 75,000 workers and helps bring millions of visitors to the state annually.

DeSantis, Disney CEO Iger spar in Florida

[**Iger,** from A1]
seems like he's decided to retaliate against us."

Earlier Monday, the Republican governor ordered an investigation into whether Disney had colluded to illegally bypass a new state law that sought to strip the entertainment company of its governing authority in a 43-square-mile region that is home to Walt Disney World, Epcot and other resorts. In 1967, in an effort to lure the company to the state, Florida granted Disney sweeping powers over its land use.

DeSantis seized on the dust-up with Disney, accusing Disney of being a "woke" corporation. The governor, who is widely expected to run for president, rallied political supporters saying, "Florida is where woke goes to die."

At the governor's urging, Florida's Republican-controlled Legislature passed a bill to eliminate the Disney-aligned Reedy Creek Improvement District and transfer its powers to a newly created Central Florida Tourism Oversight District, which is made up of DeSantis' political appointees.

Iger took issue with the formation of the new board to oversee Disney's properties, saying it appeared designed "to seek to punish a company for its exercise of a constitutional right."

"That just seems really wrong to me," Iger said.

But before DeSantis signed the measure into law in February, Reedy Creek supervisors met and adopted a new development framework intended to outlast DeSantis and like-minded supporters by hollowing out enforcement powers over Disney by the new board.

The Reedy Creek provisions preserved Disney's development authority in perpetuity, or at least until 21 years "after the death of the last survivor of the descendants of King Charles III, King of England," according to the measure.

DeSantis and other Florida leaders learned of the Reedy Creek gambit only last week.

In Monday's letter to Florida's inspector general, DeSantis demanded "a thorough review and investigation" into actions of the Reedy Creek supervisors earlier this year. The governor's office said the review was intended to explore whether civil or criminal laws had been violated.

DeSantis blasted Disney's efforts.

"These collusive and self-dealing arrangements aim to nullify the recently passed legislation, undercut Florida's legislative process, and defy the will of Floridians," DeSantis wrote in the letter to Inspector General Melinda Miguel and Mark Glass, commissioner of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

DeSantis instructed his appointees to explore "the involvement of Walt Disney World employees and agents in the execution of [the Reedy Creek] actions" and whether Walt Disney World received "any financial gain or benefit," from the actions of the previous board.

The annual meeting marked Iger's first gathering with shareholders since he returned to lead the company in November after Chapek was ousted. Since then, Iger has worked to reshape Disney's chain of command around its creative leaders — not business executives. He also initiated a plan to find $5.5 billion in savings, including by eliminating 7,000 jobs.

During the meeting, Iger acknowledged that Disney stumbled last year in its efforts to oppose the Florida legislation, but he said the company had a right to stand up for cultural issues that it believes in.

Iger also noted that Disney is Florida's largest taxpayer, that it employs more than 75,000 workers and that it helps bring millions of visitors to the state each year, boosting the state's tourism. He also announced the company plans to invest $17 billion more in its Florida parks and resorts over the next decade, which should create 13,000 new jobs.

He said the company's relationship with the state government should be "a two-way street."

"Our point on this is that any action that thwarts those efforts simply to retaliate for a position the company took sounds not just anti-business, but it sounds anti-Florida," Iger said. "And I'll just leave it at that."

The company is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, as well as 50 years in Florida.

Although the meeting was held virtually, Iger prerecorded parts of his presentation from Walt Disney World and Epcot in Orlando, Fla.

"We love the state of Florida," Iger said.

"That's reflected in not only how much we've invested over the last 50 years, but how much we have given back in the form of jobs and community service, taxes, tourism and other responsible business practices," Iger said.

"We've also always respected and appreciated what the state has done for us."

Political overtones punctuated the meeting that is typically a celebration of Disney fandom.

One shareholder complained that Disney was taking a too overt role in promoting a progressive agenda, including gay-pride parades at Disney parks.

"Over the last few years, Disney has turned from a place of magic for children to an ideological company serving LGBTQ" issues, the shareholder said during the meeting. "Over and over again, we see how your films and entertainment are increasingly promoting the 'woke' agenda."

Iger responded that the company's goal was to be "accessible to all people," and that, over the decades, Disney's stories "have had an amazingly positive impact on the world."

But Iger also tried to strike a balance, saying he recognized the concerns of some parents.

"Our primary mission needs to be to entertain," Iger said. "It should not be agenda driven.

"We should be sensitive to the fact that parents have different levels of comfort with the content delivered to their children. We're committed to delivering age appropriate content for family audiences, while also telling stories that reflect the world around us."

Outgoing Disney Chairman Susan Arnold opened the virtual meeting, and expressed gratitude for her 15 years on the board. The meeting was her last official act as she turned over the reins to incoming Chairman Mark Parker, a seven-year member of the board and executive chairman of Nike.

Shareholders also approved the election of the company's 11 board members, including Iger.

However, investors rejected three shareholder proposals, including a measure that would have demanded that Disney submit a report documenting its campaign support for state politicians in Florida.

MARKET ROUNDUP

Stocks close mixed as oil prices surge

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stock markets around the world were mixed Monday, as a jump in oil prices threatens to add upward pressure on inflation.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index gained 15.20 points, or 0.4%, to 4,124.51, though more stocks in the index fell than rose. The Dow Jones industrial average climbed 327.00 points, or 1%, to 33,601.15, while the Nasdaq composite fell 32.45 points, or 0.3%, to 12,189.45.

Oil jumped 6.3% after Saudi Arabia and other crude-producing countries said over the weekend that they would cut production. That lifted stocks of energy companies, including a 5.9% rise for Exxon Mobil, a 9.9% leap for Marathon Oil and a 4.3% gain for BP.

Although oil's jump helps energy producers, it also weighs on much of the rest of the market. Beyond raising gasoline prices and other costs for everyone, it also dents one of the main themes that helped stocks rise in this year's just completed first quarter: that turmoil in the banking system and a continued slowdown in inflation could push the Federal Reserve to ease its interest rateincreases.

The Fed has jacked up rates up at a feverish pace over the last year in hopes of undercutting high inflation. Higher rates can do that by slowing the economy, but they risk causing a recession.

They also drag down prices for stocks, bonds and other investments. That's a factor that helped cause the second-largest U.S. bank failure last month, which in turn meant harsher scrutiny on the strength of banks worldwide. The fear is that the banking industry's troubles could lead to a pullback in lending to all kinds of companies, which would further hurt the economy.

Hope on Wall Street has been rising that the Fed may already be done raising rates and that cuts to rates could even happen later this year. Such cuts would release some of the pressure on the economy, which is still growing thanks to a strong job market but has shown pain in the housing market and other corners.

Rate cuts also tend to act like steroids for financial markets. U.S. stocks have tended to return an average of 8% in the three months after the peak of the Fed's federal funds rate, according to Goldman Sachs. That includes six times since 1982.

That's why so much furor has been built among traders as they bet on how much further the Fed will raise rates. On Friday, they were leaning slightly toward the Fed holding steady at its next meeting in May, which would be the first time in more than a year that it didn't hike rates.

But after Monday's leap for oil prices, some are betting that the Fed may raise rates by another quarter of a percentage point in May, according to CME Group.

Short-term Treasury yields initially rose on such expectations, but they eased after the release of a disappointing report on the U.S. economy. It showed manufacturing activity weakened last month by more than economists expected.

March marked its fifth straight month of contraction and showed the biting effects of past rate hikes are already working through the system. After that report, the two-year Treasury yield fell to 3.97% from 4.04% late Friday. It had been above 4.11% earlier in the morning.

It got its initial push higher from the rally for oil prices. A barrel of U.S. crude oil jumped $4.75 to $80.42 after oil producers said over the weekend that they would cut production from May until the end of the year.

Less oil would raise its price, as long as demand stays steady.

Brent crude, the international standard, rose 5.04% to $84.93 a barrel. It's roughly back to where it was a month ago, though it's still well below where it was in March 2022, when it topped $130 a barrel after Russia's invasion of Ukraine raised worries about energy supplies.

"This will create both political waves across Europe and even higher general inflation in the USA, leading to renewed pressure on the Federal Reserve to keep hiking rates aggressively," Clifford Bennett, chief economist at ACY Securities, said in a report.

In markets abroad, stock indexes were mixed across Europe and Asia.

Major stock indexes

Index	Close	Daily change	Daily % change	YTD % change
Dow industrials	33,601.15	+327.00	+0.98	+1.37
S&P 500	4,124.51	+15.20	+0.37	+7.42
Nasdaq composite	12,189.45	-32.45	-0.27	+16.46
S&P 400	2,511.21	-0.95	-0.04	+3.33
Russell 2000	1,802.31	-0.17	-0.01	+2.33
EuroStoxx 50	4,307.19	-7.86	-0.18	+13.58
Nikkei (Japan)	28,188.15	+146.67	+0.52	+8.02
Hang Seng (Hong Kong)	20,409.18	+9.07	+0.04	+3.17

Associated Press

Jury pares Tesla's racism lawsuit tab

Automaker now owes $3.2 million to Black ex-contract worker.

BY JOEL ROSENBLATT AND MALATHI NAYAK

A jury said Tesla Inc. owes $3.2 million to a Black former contract worker for failing to protect him from racial abuse — 98% less than a 2021 verdict in the same case.

The $137-million award that Owen Diaz won two years ago was among the highest ever for an individual suing over discrimination in the U.S. Diaz elected for a retrial on damages after a judge said the amount was too high and concluded $15 million was the most that the evidence in the case and the Constitution would allow. Jurors in San Francisco federal court reached Monday's verdict after about a day of deliberations.

At the close of the five-day retrial, a lawyer for Diaz asked the jury to award as much as $150 million in punitive damages — equal to 15% of Tesla's cash flow at the time Diaz was subjected to racial slurs and graffiti at the plant in Fremont, Calif., about seven years ago.

Instead, the jury came back with $175,000 for economic losses and $3 million in punitive damages.

"I don't think the truth drove the decisions here," Lawrence Organ, a lawyer for Diaz, said after the verdict. He said Diaz's credibility was wrongly attacked by the defense during the trial and said he's filed a request to the judge to grant a new trial due to "misconduct." Tesla's strategy was to "minimize and sanitize" and "it's just sad that those antics worked," he said.

Alex Spiro, a lawyer for Tesla, declined to comment.

Elon Musk's company has faced years of complaints from Black workers that managers at the factory turned a blind eye to the commonplace use of racial slurs on the assembly line and were slow to clean up graffiti with swastikas and other hate symbols scrawled in common areas.

In a separate case, Tesla is fighting claims by California's civil rights department that hundreds of Black workers at its factory were subject to mistreatment, including harassment, unequal pay and retaliation.

The original jury awarded Diaz $6.9 million for emotional distress and walloped Tesla with $130 million in punitive damages. A juror said afterward that the panel was sending a message to the company about using contract employees as a way to mitigate its own responsibility for the culture within its factories.

Tesla called the 2021 verdict "staggering" and challenged it as excessive.

U.S. District Judge William Orrick later said he was compelled by legal principles to reduce the jury's award but he also concluded there was ample "disturbing" evidence to support the outcome of the trial.

Jurors heard that the Tesla factory in Fremont "was saturated with racism," Orrick wrote in his April 2022 ruling, adding that Diaz's co-workers called him "the N-word and other slurs," and that supervisors and Tesla's broader management failed to help.

In the damages retrial, a lawyer for Diaz, J. Bernard Alexander, told jurors Friday that his client's experience of a racist attack by a Tesla supervisor was sufficient for them to conclude the contractor had suffered, but that they had heard evidence of at least three such instances.

Spiro told jurors that punitive damages must be reasonable and proportionate. He reminded them it's important that if they think a witness deliberately testified untruthfully, they don't have to believe anything he said.

Rosenblatt and Nayak write for Bloomberg.

ATTORNEYS

WORKPLACE RIGHTS

- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Wrongful Termination
- Retaliation
- Disability
- Pregnancy Leave

NO RECOVERY = NO FEE

Call for FREE Consultation

310-273-3180

KSJM

Kesluk, Silverstein, Jacob & Morrison

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

9255 Sunset Blvd., #411 , L.A., CA 90069

www.californialaborlawattorney.com

Los Angeles Times BUSINESS TO BUSINESS PUBLISHING

IN HOUSE COUNSEL LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Thursday, May 4 | 6PM - 8:30PM

The Beverly Hilton

Scan to reserve your spot today!

www.latimes.com/b2bpublishing

Platinum Sponsor RUTAN UWLA Gold Sponsor Waymaker LLP

Business magazines (print and digital) are produced by the L.A. Times B2B Publishing team and do not involve the editorial staff of the L.A. Times.

OPINION

EDITORIAL

HOWARD LIPIN San Diego Union-Tribune

A 2020 FORD F-150 Raptor pickup truck on display at the San Diego Convention Center in 2019.

Hulking SUVs and trucks are deadly to pedestrians

Why aren't regulators pushing for safer models?

AMERICAN CAR BUYERS' love of big SUVs and trucks is one reason pedestrian deaths have hit a 40-year high.

The heavier, taller vehicles now make up 80% of car sales in the U.S., and a growing body of research shows they are more deadly when drivers hit pedestrians and cyclists. The mass of SUVs and trucks means they take longer to stop and strike with more force.

They also have larger blind spots than smaller cars. With reduced visibility, drivers turning at an intersection are more likely to hit pedestrians, according to one study.

Drivers are also less likely to see small children directly in front of the vehicle. With a higher profile, when a SUV or truck crashes into a person, the front hits the chest and head for more traumatic injuries.

And it's not just the gas guzzlers that are the problem. The head of the National Transportation Safety Board, Jennifer Homendy, warned earlier this year that heavier, more powerful electric vehicles could increase the risk of serious injury and death from vehicle collisions.

Because of the large battery packs needed to power zero-emission SUVs and trucks, electric vehicle models weigh significantly more than their combustion engine versions. Ford's F-150 Lightning EV pickup is 2,000 to 3,000 pounds heavier than the gas-powered model, she said. The electric GMC Hummer — which President Biden posted a picture of himself driving — weighs roughly 9,000 pounds. Its battery pack alone weighs 2,900 pounds, which is about the same weight as a typical Honda Civic.

Yet, despite the research and rising number of pedestrian deaths, the federal government has done little to address the risk of having so many bigger, heavier vehicles on the road. (Homedy's agency investigates crashes but doesn't set standards for vehicle design. That's the job of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.)

In the absence of federal action, California lawmakers are considering a proposal that could eventually charge car owners a fee for registering heavier vehicles. Assemblymember Chris Ward (D-San Diego) has introduced Assembly Bill 251 to create a task force to study the costs and benefits of a vehicle weight fee. The California Transportation Commission requested the legislation last year, recognizing the connection between increasingly heavy vehicles and pedestrian deaths.

This shouldn't be a controversial bill. The task force is an incremental but critical first step — one that is already overdue — toward addressing the serious danger posed by ever larger vehicles on the roads.

California already charges a weight fee on commercial vehicles. This would be the first such fee for passenger vehicles in the state. Several other states, including New York, Florida and Virginia, currently base registration fees on vehicle weight.

Last year, Washington D.C., hiked registration fees for heavier vehicles; owners of SUVS, minivans and trucks weighing more than 6,000 pounds will have to pay $500 per year, up from $155. The idea is to charge motorists a lot more because their cars have an outsize impact — not only are mega-vehicles more dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists, they're also harder on the roads and bad for the environment. The money is supposed to be used for street safety around schools. The D.C. law does let electric vehicle owners subtract 1,000 pounds from the total weight, so as not to discourage residents from switching to zero-emission models.

As EV technology improves, the battery packs are expected to become smaller. But that advancement will be of little help if automakers and consumers continue to buy vehicles with little regard to their danger to people in front of the windshield. Federal regulators should push automakers to design vehicles that are safer not just for the driver but for the pedestrians and bicyclists. Until that happens, California lawmakers can pass AB 251 to help create momentum for change.

LETTERS

MATIAS J. OCNER Miami Herald

SUPPORTERS of former President Trump gather to see his motorcade in West Palm Beach, Fla., before he flew to New York on Monday to face charges.

Trump's bigger weakness

Re "GOP made a bet on Trump — and it could be costly," news analysis, April 1

IF FORMER PRESIDENT TRUMP becomes the GOP nominee in 2024, the decision by party leaders to rally around him could be far costlier than they imagine.

Trump can be targeted as the single individual most responsible for the overturning of Roe vs. Wade. After winning the presidency in 2016, Trump appointed three extremely right-wing, activist Supreme Court justices who were instrumental in the overturning of Roe.

If Trump becomes the GOP nominee, the Democrats should make Trump's assault on women's rights the centerpiece of their campaigns. And they should focus those attacks not just on Trump, but on all of his GOP enablers.

While the GOP will try to paint the indicted Trump as a martyr, the Democrats would be wise to not allow Republicans to use the indictment as a distraction. They should keep the focus on how devastating the first Trump presidency was for women's health, autonomy and rights.

MATHEW SINGERMAN, Newbury Park

The Republican Party line is that Trump's indictment in Manhattan is a politically motivated prosecution.

Au contraire. In truth, if anything evinces political motivation, it is the incredibly protracted delay in filing charges for Trump's numerous well-documented offenses in various jurisdictions. Had any of this been committed by someone not nearly so politically prominent, he would have been charged and tried years ago.

I fear that history will record Trump's late-coming indictments as yet another example of how justice delayed is justice denied.

SARAH S. WILLIAMS
Santa Barbara

As far as I can tell, Trump has said only one insightful thing in his entire life.

When he stated, "I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody, and I wouldn't lose any voters," he was making a hyperbolic claim that has proven to be quite sound. It has also been a glimpse into his decision-making.

If he honestly felt there would be no consequences for egregious behavior, there was nothing to stop him. Morality is clearly not a factor.

For Trump's supporters to admit that he finally crossed the line is to admit that they have been wrong all along. GOP leaders and Fox News have long known that Trump was a disaster, but they made a bargain with the devil. Now they are fearful that turning on him would mean alienating the same mob that gives them power and money.

The fantasy is thus perpetuated. Democracy and rule of law are at stake. Hush money is small potatoes, but it is the first step. The Jan 6. insurrection and attempted election fraud in Georgia will be everything.

LANCE KELLER
Hermosa Beach

::

Former Vice President Mike Pence said, "The unprecedented indictment of a former president of the U.S. for a campaign finance issue is an outrage."

In other words, he might have committed a crime, but it wasn't bad enough for him to be held accountable. Absolutely stunning.

BRUCE HARRIS
Meridian, Idaho

Convicted and on your side

Re "After verdict, tributes instead of scorn," April 2

Suspended Los Angeles City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas enjoys wide support despite being convicted of ethical lapses. The same can be said for former President Trump.

Both may be politicians, but the two are completely different in the amount and degree of ethical lapses, their political leanings, their base and radicalization of support, and their place on the national stage.

So what does that say about us, the electorate, that many are willing to overlook ethical flaws of our leaders as long as we like their politics? Have we become so tribal that nothing matters other than "I don't care about ethical right or wrong, as long as I get my version of ideological right or wrong"?

BRAD GOLSTEIN
Woodland Hills

::

I totally agree with the praise for Ridley-Thomas. I am grateful for all that he has done for his fellow Angelenos, and especially Black Angelenos.

Thank you, Mr. Ridley-Thomas.

LYNN THOMPSON
Redondo Beach

::

I was dismayed by the hypocrisy displayed in the outpouring of support for Ridley-Thomas upon his felony corruption conviction, as compared with the near unanimous condemnation of fellow Councilman Kevin de León for his racially abhorrent comments made in a secretly taped meeting.

Ridley-Thomas' past accomplishments and wide network of political allies are cited as the reasons for looking past a jury's finding that he committed numerous felonies while in office. But it can be argued that De León has also been a fervent advocate for his constituents and has accomplished much for them.

Yet, De León has been all but tarred and feathered for his verbal indiscretions, while Ridley-Thomas has apparently suffered little taint to his reputation.

AGUSTIN MEDINA
South Pasadena

::

Re " 'Alvin Bragg has made America great again,' " letters, April 1

A letter writer sees bias in the fact that The Times referred to Trump's party affiliation in reporting on his indictment but did not do the same for Ridley-Thomas after his conviction in a federal corruption case.

This is not bias, but simply the reflection of a couple of facts.

First, L.A. City Council seats are nonpartisan offices; the presidency is not.

Second, Trump claims to be the head of the Republican Party, and he is the de facto head of that party, whether it likes that or not. The same cannot be said of Ridley-Thomas with respect to the Democratic Party.

JUNE AILIN SEWELL
Marina del Rey

Courts that could use reform

Re "I'm one of the Israeli protesters. This is why," Opinion, April 2

John E. Golub avoids touching the important issue of the undemocratic nature of the country's judicial system.

As Golub notes, there is no clear constitution to guide judges; what he doesn't mention is that these judges are selected mostly by a clique of other judges and lawyers. This is unlike the United States, where the president nominates federal judges and the Senate vets and approves them.

Yes, politics plays a role. However, the Knesset (Israel's parliament) currently has almost no say in appointments. This on its face is undemocratic.

The current government went too far with its proposed changes. However, democratic reforms and delineation of authority would be healthy.

BARRY F. CHAITIN
Newport Beach

::

Kudos to Israel's patriotic protesters, who have fended off (for now) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's attack on the Israeli judiciary.

The timing seems almost providential, occurring as Jews prepare to celebrate Passover, a holiday recalling the ancient Hebrews' deliverance from a pharaoh's oppression.

Netanyahu began his political career as Israel's John F. Kennedy — the charismatic younger brother who stepped up when his anointed older brother died defending his country. (Joseph Kennedy Jr. died in World War II; Yoni Netanyahu was killed leading Israel's 1976 rescue of 102 hostages in Entebbe, Uganda.)

"Bibi" then became Israel's Ronald Reagan, taking on Iran's "evil empire," and also its Bill Clinton, leading a booming tech-driven economy.

But now, he has become both Israel's Richard Nixon, for trying to fire Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and its Donald Trump, for attacking his country's democratic foundations to serve his personal interests.

STEPHEN A. SILVER
San Francisco

HOW TO WRITE TO US

Please send letters to letters@latimes.com. For submission guidelines, see latimes.com/letters or call 1-800-LA TIMES, ext. 74511.

Los Angeles Times
FOUNDED DECEMBER 4, 1881
A California Times Publication

Executive Chairman Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong

News: *Executive Editor* Kevin Merida • *Senior Vice President, Content Business Strategy* Julia Turner • *Managing Editors* Shani O. Hilton, Sara Yasin • *Editor at Large* Scott Kraft • *Deputy Managing Editors* Hector Becerra, Shelby Grad, Sharon Matthews, Christian Stone • *Creative Director* Amy King • *Assistant Managing Editors* John Canalis, Steve Clow, Angel Jennings, Kimbriell Kelly, Iliana Limón Romero, Samantha Melbourneweaver, Ben Muessig, Craig Nakano, B.J. Terhune • *General Manager, Food* Laurie Ochoa • *General Manager, Latino Initiatives* Angel Rodriguez • **Opinion:** *Editorial Page Editor* Terry Tang • *Deputy Editorial Page Editor* Mariel Garza • **Business:** *President and Chief Operating Officer* Chris Argentieri • *Chief Human Resources Officer* Nancy V. Antoniou • *Chief of Staff; Head of Strategy and Revenue* Anna Magzanyan • *Chief Information Officer* Ghalib Kassam • *General Counsel* Jeff Glasser • *V.P., Communications* Hillary Manning

OP-ED

AL SEIB Los Angeles Times

TRAFFIC FATALITIES soared to a two-decade high in Los Angeles in 2022, and speed makes car crashes deadlier.

An overdue fix for California streets

Speed cameras would save lives. Support a state bill to pilot their use in six cities.

By Michael Schneider

SPEED IS THE SINGLE biggest factor in determining the severity of a car crash, and yet California has resisted the most obvious tool to slow down traffic: speed-enforcement cameras. Still, the state has learned a few lessons over the years from experiments with red-light cameras, and there's now a bill in Sacramento that could deploy similar technology to lifesaving effect.

Without speed cameras, cities face an untenable choice: Let drivers flout traffic laws and allow vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists to die, or increase enforcement by police — which fuels conflict and casualties. If anything, California is moving toward reducing traffic stops, which can be a pretext for harassing Black and Latino drivers.

The new legislation, introduced by Assemblymember Laura Friedman (D-Glendale), would legalize speed cameras for pilot programs in Los Angeles, San Jose, Oakland, Glendale, Long Beach and San Francisco, providing a way to step up enforcement of speed laws without police confrontation or human bias.

Speed-camera proposals in Sacramento in 2021 and 2022 died over concerns about privacy and equitable enforcement, and the revised legislation this year addresses those fears: Tickets would be issued to the person listed as the owner of the speeding vehicle, not to the driver, so no facial recognition would be involved — a point of concern for the American Civil Liberties Union. Cameras would be distributed fairly across those six cities to avoid disproportionately ticketing certain populations.

Police organizations also opposed the previous bills. One sponsor said the unions were concerned that the success of speed cameras would lead to reductions in police workforces. But that doesn't seem likely. California has plenty of other problems for officers to pursue if speeding becomes less of a threat. It makes more sense for officers to focus on more serious, time-sensitive crimes.

Drivers would get plenty of notice to avoid incurring fines. Under the pilots proposed, there would be posted warning signs to notify drivers that they're about to enter a zone that has speed cameras. The pilot would begin with a 30-day period educating drivers (but not issuing tickets), followed by a 60-day period in which automated warnings are issued but no tickets. After that, first violations will result in nominal fines, increasing for repeated violations.

More than a decade ago, drivers and politicians widely faulted red-light cameras in Southern California for excessive fines. Some cities were accused of issuing tickets for right turns at red lights not to improve safety but to raise revenue. The L.A. City Council nixed red-light cameras in 2011, while they still remain in operation in surrounding cities such as Beverly Hills and Culver City.

Another key change is where the revenue will go. Unlike with red-light cameras, revenue from the speed camera pilot program would not go to cities' general funds but toward roadway improvements that make streets safer for all and reduce the likelihood of speeding in the first place.

If Sacramento allows these pilot programs, we should see an almost immediate safety improvement. Indeed, if drivers know that they're likely to be caught by an automated speed camera, they'll be less inclined to speed in the first place. Slowing down will save lives.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, when struck by a vehicle traveling at 20 mph, 95% of pedestrians survive. At 30 mph, 60% survive; at 40 mph, 20%. At speeds above 50 mph, the survival rate is 0%.

Every arterial in Los Angeles has at least a posted speed limit of 35 mph, but drivers routinely reach 45 mph or faster. Even a recent state action that allowed Los Angeles to lower speed limits didn't make much of a dent; the main result was the limit returning to 35 mph on some of the streets where it had crept higher.

It's no wonder, then, that traffic fatalities soared to a two-decade high in Los Angeles in 2022, especially in light of the massive trucks and SUVs currently popular on our streets.

No one should have to fear for their life while crossing a street or riding a bike in Los Angeles — a city where a pedestrian is killed once every three days.

Other cities have shown that speed cameras help address this problem. Automated enforcement is already a reality in Chicago, New York City, Philadelphia, Portland, Ore., Seattle and Washington. A recent study from Chicago's Department of Transportation found that cameras decreased the risk of serious injury or death in crashes involving speeding.

Progressive California is overdue to adopt automated solutions with proven safety benefits for all who use our roads. Automated speed cameras will save lives in Los Angeles.

MICHAEL SCHNEIDER is the founder of Streets for All.

How crypto could upend our taxes

The IRS has set some ground rules for digital assets, but unanswered questions will cost us all.

By Amanda Parsons

ONE OF THE MANY questions raised by cryptocurrency is how to tax this new world of digital assets. It poses real tax evasion concerns.

Crypto was explicitly developed to allow people to transfer currency to one another directly, circumventing the oversight of financial institutions. The Internal Revenue Service relies on information shared by these financial institutions to ensure tax compliance — a system cryptocurrency defies. The crypto space has well-documented anarchist roots, and it has largely been averse to government regulation. Cryptocurrency and blockchain — complex and novel technologies — were not designed with tax returns in mind.

The IRS has made some things clear about crypto taxes. As of now, individual taxpayers must answer a question about whether they have participated in digital asset transactions. If I buy a token, it doubles in value and then I sell it, I must pay capital gains tax. Last month, the IRS issued a reminder that income from digital asset transactions has to be reported. And it recently released much-needed guidance on when NFTs, or non-fungible tokens, should be taxed as collectibles. Congress passed new crypto broker-dealer reporting requirements in 2021, and the Treasury Department is expected to release regulations on these requirements soon.

But the federal government has yet to answer very real questions from crypto investors and participants about how they should report their income. When is crypto mining a hobby and when is it a business? Does a taxpayer realize gain or loss when they lend cryptocurrency? If a U.S. resident stakes cryptocurrency (meaning it's pooled with other crypto in a system to validate the blockchain, from which rewards are collected) via an offshore server, which country gets to tax the resulting income? Tax bills will look very different depending on the answers to these questions.

If crypto income is not taxed fully and appropriately, the ramifications could extend far beyond the blockchain. Effective crypto taxation promises substantial revenues: The new broker-dealer reporting requirements alone could raise an estimated $28 billion within the next decade.

Moreover, the IRS depends on high levels of voluntary compliance from Americans. Given the extremely low risk of audit (IRS data from the 2019 tax year indicate that just 0.25% of taxpayers are audited) and low penalties for those who do underpay, tax evasion should be rampant. Why isn't it? One explanation is tax morale: the nonrational reasons that people choose to file and pay, including social norms and the belief that others in their community are paying as well.

KEITH SRAKOCIC Associated Press

THE GOVERNMENT needs to resolve uncertainties for cryptocurrency users about how to report their income.

Unfortunately, tax morale is a precarious enforcer of tax law. Once people start to see others not paying taxes, or they start to view the tax system as illegitimate, they are less likely to comply themselves. This can set off a nasty feedback cycle, creating havoc for the already overextended IRS and draining essential government revenue.

This is why the stakes are so high for crypto taxation. Getting it right is about the legitimacy and effectiveness of our entire tax system.

In a vacuum of government guidance, two specific tax morale problems emerge for crypto. First, the lack of clarity gives crypto interest groups opportunities for legal arbitrage. They can take advantage of uncertainties surrounding this new technology, and the complexities of our tax system, to seek tax outcomes through the courts that flout the intent of existing law or policy. This in turn can harm tax morale.

Second, the confusion could deter crypto investors and participants who genuinely want to pay their taxes from doing so. Reading through conversations on the r/CryptoTax subreddit reveals that many people who are trying to comply with tax law can't figure out how to do it. If this confusion ultimately discourages taxpayers from paying on their crypto income, it will create more examples of people successfully dodging taxes, and tax morale may suffer.

The Treasury and the IRS should provide timely guidance on the open questions for crypto taxation, building on the recent guidance for NFTs. Congress should consider whether new or updated laws are also needed to ensure a comprehensive and coherent system for digital assets.

By April 18, most Americans will have voluntarily filed and paid their taxes (though Californians affected by this winter's storms have until October). Voluntary tax compliance is essential — and fragile. We shouldn't let crypto upend the belief that (most) others are paying their fair share as well.

AMANDA PARSONS is an associate professor at the University of Colorado Law School. She writes about the intersection of tax law and emerging technologies.

Why 'Never Trumpers' now face a time of woe

For all the talk about how the former president's indictment helps him solidify Republican support, it ultimately is a setback to his party.

JONAH GOLDBERG

NOW IS A TIME of woe, not just for "Never Trump" conservatives, but also for the much larger group of Republicans who made peace with Donald Trump once but dread having to do it again.

In fact, just going by my unscientific survey, the melancholy is worse for those Republicans who may have agreed with the Never Trump crowd in principle (and in private), but for pragmatic and professional reasons found it necessary to spend years eating the steaming bowl of unpalatable fare that fate had put in front of them.

But after disappointing Republican performances in 2018, 2020 and 2022, almost entirely because of Trump's influence, a lot of these former accommodationists and transactionists have concluded — correctly — that Trump's an albatross for the GOP.

For all the talk about how this indictment helps Trump solidify Republican support, it hurts his — and the party's — prospects in 2024. People who voted against Trump in 2020 — and against his most sycophantic disciples in 2022 — are unlikely to suddenly change their minds about him because he got indicted for a scheme to pay hush money to an adult film actress. And contrary to the alternate reality peddled by Trump and his biggest fans that he is the voice of the American majority, more Americans dislike him than like him.

And, again, contrary to the echo-chamber mythmaking of Trump's PR team, reaction to the New York indictment confirms it hurts him. A new CNN poll finds that 1 in 5 Republicans approve of the indictment and 1 in 4 conservatives do. Majorities of independents (62%) and Democrats (94%) approve. Overall, 6 in 10 Americans support the indictment.

Meanwhile, Republican voters are rallying around Trump. In other words, this indictment is good for Trump in the hothouse of Republican primary politics 10 months before the Iowa caucus, but affirmatively bad for a party that wants to win general elections.

At least Never Trumpers get the consolation prize of saying "I told you so." The Never Again camp, however, is probably despondent at the prospect of having to get out the spoon for another helping — and losing again.

The despair is understandable but possibly premature.

Manhattan Dist. Atty. Alvin Bragg's indictment may be the first indictment of a former president, but it is unlikely to be the last. Georgia is likely to indict Trump for his effort to overturn the 2020 election, and most legal observers believe that special counsel Jack Smith will probably indict Trump on federal charges related to his actions on Jan. 6, 2021, or his absconding with classified materials — or both.

Predicting what the future will look like is always a mistake. After months of revelations and Trump outbursts, it's not inconceivable that the MAGA forces will disperse from exhaustion.

But one should not bet the mortgage on a sudden outbreak of intestinal fortitude, strategic resolve or conservative principle among GOP leaders when it comes to Trump. At least for some Republicans, supporting Trump on the New York indictment might be the best way politically to prepare for more serious indictments if they happen. (As a critic of Bragg's decision, I think opposing the indictment is a defensible position on the merits.)

Such positioning now could help inoculate against charges of reflexive hatred of Trump should weightier indictments drop. Right now, even Mike Pence and Ron DeSantis feel the need to defend Trump. But given that they want to run for the presidency, they're simply waiting for the opportunity to argue the GOP needs a fresh start.

It's worth recalling that despite the immediate frenzy of GOP support for Trump after the FBI search of Mar-a-Lago in August, the former president's poll numbers did not improve much, even among Republicans. Indeed, Trump's unfavorability numbers are remarkably high and stable.

As the New York drama unfolds, and the unseemly facts about porn star payoffs and Trumpian drama once again fill Americans' headspace, new indictments may seem less like fresh outrages from the "deep state" and more like last straws and justifications for pushing away the bowl.

Interestingly, former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson seized this moment to move up his formal announcement that he will be challenging Trump for the nomination and that Trump should drop out of the race because of all of his baggage.

Perhaps even more revealing, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, among the most pliant of Trump enablers, recently suggested the front-runner now — i.e. Trump — may not be the eventual nominee. The 2024 race needs to be a referendum on Biden, he explained, and therefore the GOP needs a candidate who can make that case. "It's about addition, not subtraction," he told podcaster Dave Rubin.

That's not exactly a brave repudiation of Trump, but it is a baby step in the right direction.

@JonahDispatch

Vague data mask expulsions as student transfers

[**Transfers,** from A1]
district-level reports — obtained through public records requests to 23 of the state's largest districts — revealed deeper insights into local transfer practices that take place with little public accountability or clear disclosure.

Over five academic years, from 2016-17 to 2020-21, these districts recorded 5,800 transfers for "specific discipline reasons." As many as 3,700 of these might have been expulsions.

School districts are required to report expulsions to the state and to the public. But the "specific discipline reasons" category also includes involuntary transfers such as Ricky's and court-mandated transfers to schools at juvenile justice facilities.

The districts — which serve almost 1 million, or about 17%, of the state's 5.9 million students — also recorded more than 16,300 transfers to alternative schools, another category. Student advocates and educators say these moves frequently follow behavioral problems. But the state does not require districts to specify the reason a student is transferred to an alternative school.

Students can enroll in alternative schools to meet their needs: smaller campuses, behavioral or academic support or a more flexible school day. Educators and others say it can be beneficial for some students to change schools and get a fresh start.

But advocates say transparency is needed in state data to ensure that districts are not hiding disciplinary transfers to alternative schools, especially when those campuses can have lower academic rigor and graduation rates and higher chronic absenteeism.

"Transfers are being used as a backdoor way of removing kids from school," said Chelsea Helena, an education attorney for Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County. "And it's impacting Black and brown kids more."

In the majority of districts, including San Bernardino City Unified, Long Beach Unified and Oakland Unified, Black students were disproportionately represented among students transferred for disciplinary reasons or to alternative schools, according to the district data. While Latino students were not overrepresented in most districts, their sizable share of enrollment means they were most frequently transferred.

Even more disciplinary transfers probably occur when students are counseled to voluntarily switch from one traditional school to another.

Victor Leung, director of education equity for the ACLU of Southern California, says these types of transfers are "one of the most common and insidious problems" his team sees. Parents are often pressured to agree to a voluntary transfer to avoid a formal expulsion, even though the expulsion carries due process and appeals rights, Leung said. An additional layer of oversight requires school board approval of expulsions.

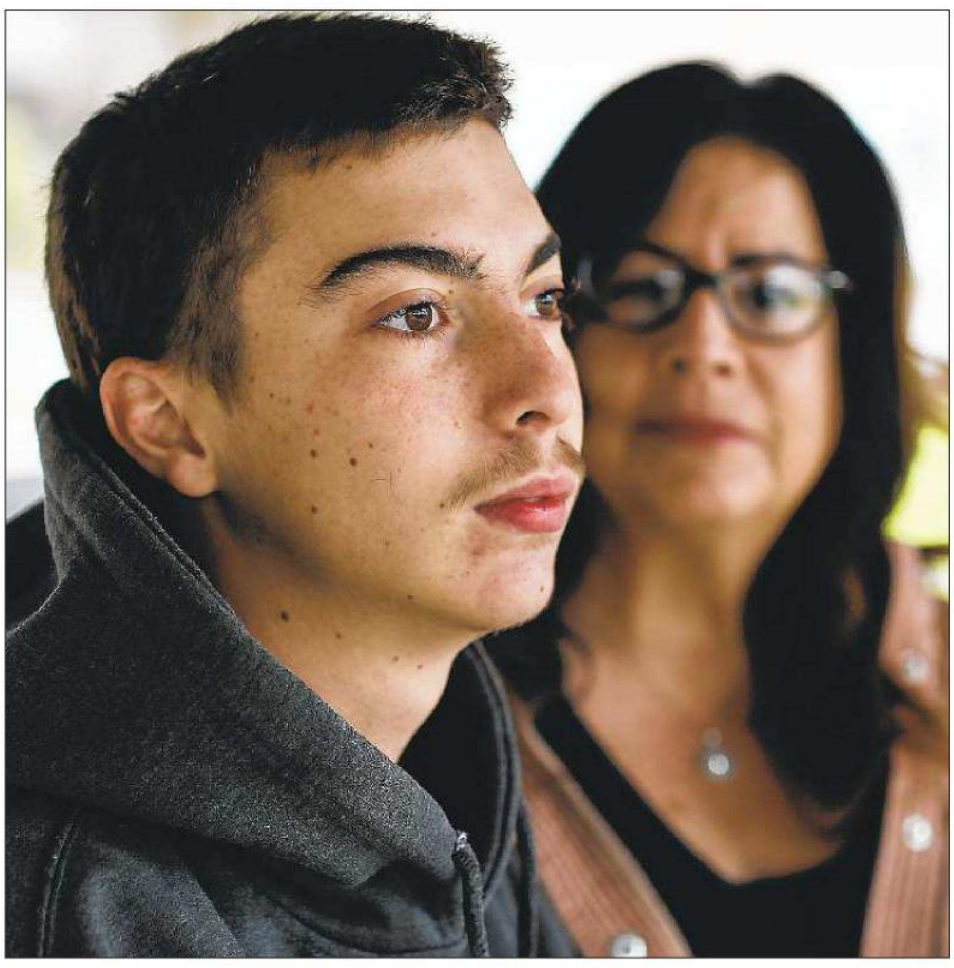
Unlike expulsions — which are generally assigned for causing serious physical injury or possessing drugs or weapons — transfers are largely unregulated. Districts develop their own policies on transfers, with varying — if any — rules about appeals.

In 2014, a state law prohibited districts from forcing students to transfer if they were recommended for expulsion but won their expulsion hearing. Yet a loophole remains that allows districts to transfer students instead of expelling them and face minimal scrutiny.

Following a reporter's inquiries to the Department of Education about its transfer process oversight and reporting rules, state Supt. Tony Thurmond in a news release acknowledged "that some districts have pushed families toward voluntary or involuntary transfer to avoid reporting expulsions."

Last month he announced the creation of a public tip line to identify districts doing exactly this.

"School districts trying to hide actual discipline rates through practices such as masking expulsions as transfers will not be tolerated," Thurmond said.

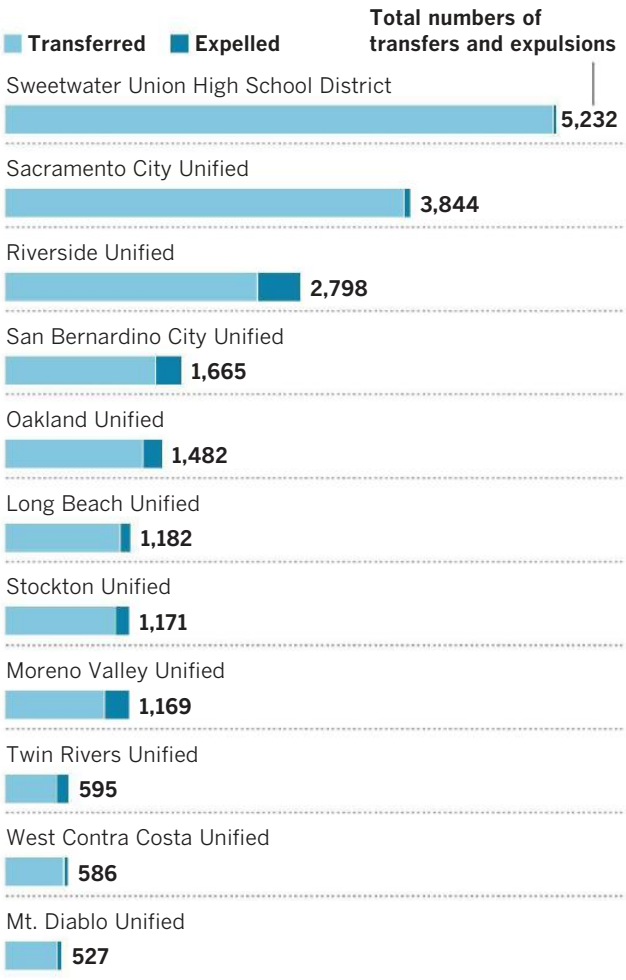


ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

"A TRANSFER is, like, something you do voluntarily," Ricky Carmona, seen with his aunt, said after a school official recommended him for "involuntary transfer."

Student transfers and expulsions across districts

A Hechinger investigation found certain types of transfers dwarfed expulsions in California's largest school districts between the 2016-17 and 2020-21 academic years.



Transfer data includes students moved for disciplinary reasons and students sent to alternative schools.

Transfer data obtained by the Hechinger Report; expulsions obtained from the California Department of Education.

FAZIL KHAN Hechinger Report

Effects on kids

One reason expulsions have come under attack in California and nationwide is because of the disruption they cause in students' lives and academic trajectories. California has one of the lowest expulsion rates in the country.

Switching schools, whatever the reason, tends to be bad for kids, harming their development, disrupting their relationships and, most severely and consistently, suppressing their test scores and likelihood of graduation.

In Ricky's case, he is further behind at Options for Youth and is barely accumulating credits. He spent more than half the school year completing packets mostly independently — and the family is exploring a GED diploma as an alternative goal.

Neither the Bonita Unified School District nor Options for Youth commented on his situation.

"Any disruption to a child's education program is a problem," said Helena, of Neighborhood Legal Services. "Especially coming off of two years of catastrophic disruption to kids' education."

In the 23 districts that provided data, transfer numbers varied widely.

For example, the 114,500-student San Diego Unified, the second-largest district in the state, expelled 335 students, transferred 288 for specific discipline reasons and sent 94 to alternative schools. But Sacramento City Unified, which serves nearly 44,000 students, expelled 52, transferred 511 for specific discipline reasons and logged 3,281 transfers to alternative schools.

Stephan Brown, director of student hearing and placement at Sacramento City Unified, said families often support transfers.

The majority of transfers to alternative schools in Sacramento City Unified are for reasons other than discipline, such as being behind on coursework, he said. The district has partnered with community organizations that help mediate conflicts and minimize the need for exclusionary discipline. Brown considers transfers to be a positive alternative to expulsion.

Administrators at Riverside Unified and San Bernardino City Unified also described their alternative schools as supportive, complementary educational options for students who have struggled in traditional schools.

L.A. Unified

Transfer data are unclear for Los Angeles Unified, which has spent years working to reduce exclusionary discipline. The district beat the state by almost a decade in banning suspensions for willful defiance, including for actions such as chewing gum, playing with a phone, tapping feet and napping.

Despite its discipline reform initiatives, the largest district does not appear to follow the state's instructions for logging transfers.

In data L.A. Unified submitted to the state, obtained through a public records request, the district reported zero transfers for disciplinary reasons and zero transfers to alternative schools in the academic years from 2016-17 to 2020-21.

The district operates a program it calls "opportunity transfers" for students who are moved to a new school "to address student misconduct after prior interventions have failed." The district records such transfers internally.

A district spokesperson, in writing, described opportunity transfers as a response to less egregious student misbehavior that falls short of warranting expulsion. These transfers tend to be voluntary — proposed by the school or district but agreed upon by the student's family. Parents can appeal the transfer, and the decision of the appeals committee is final.

L.A. Unified's internal records show that it made 138 opportunity transfers from the 2017-18 school year through 2021-22.

The district logs opportunity transfers with the state as "regular, nondisciplinary transfers" because they are voluntary, the spokesperson said. But such a classification conflicts with the district's own discipline-related definition and with state guidance.

L.A. Unified served almost 35,000 students across 53 of its alternative schools in 2021-22, according to state enrollment data. Officials did not answer questions about how transfers to alternative schools are recorded.

Disciplinary efforts have focused on expanding programs nurturing positive student behavior and improving school culture, including a daily focus on mindfulness and trauma-informed practices.

"We truly have an array of practices that are working to address school climate and positive culture in all schools," said Pia Escudero, the district's executive director of student health and human services.

Megan Stanton-Trehan, director of the Youth Justice Education Clinic at Loyola Law School, credits L.A. Unified for taking steps to reduce exclusionary discipline but questions the accuracy of the district's reported transfer data.

Without a clear distinction between transfers that are discipline-related and those that are not, "it becomes difficult for the community to understand what the real problems are," Stanton-Trehan said. "Is it really discipline? Is it attendance? Does the student need special education or other support that they're not receiving?"

State oversight

In October 2021, Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County sued the California Department of Education, alleging that Black and Latino students are disproportionately harmed by some districts' disciplinary policies and that the state has failed to monitor and take action against transfers that function as exclusionary discipline.

The state is violating the right of equal protection for students by failing to safeguard their right to an equal education, the suit alleges. Attorneys are preparing to go to trial.

There have been other calls for legislative action, including requiring clear public reporting of discipline-related transfers with categories that identify why a student transferred. State Sen. Nancy Skinner (D-Berkeley), who has introduced a series of measures on school discipline, said she is considering how the Legislature might take action after learning of the Hechinger Report's findings.

The California Department of Education is working on guidance that would advise districts on their use of disciplinary transfers, a spokesperson said.

Recent momentum to address transfers comes as schools have reported more severe problems with student behavior since the pandemic.

Experts say school districts must be proactive, which requires training teachers in child and adolescent development, relationship building and behavior management as well as staffing schools with adequate numbers of counselors and social workers.

Still, school leaders face what can seem like competing priorities: serving all students, including those who misbehave and require discipline, and maintaining an orderly school environment. Advocates say understanding transfers is key to understanding how discipline is being meted out to California students.

When Ricky talks about his situation, he slips into saying he was expelled.

"It might as well be [an expulsion]," he said. "I can't go back."

This article was produced by the Hechinger Report, a nonprofit, independent news organization focused on inequality and innovation in education.

Cleanup looks tough after train derails in Montana, spilling beer and clay

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PARADISE, Mont. — Crews could face a difficult cleanup task after a 25-car train derailment spilled powdered clay and cases of beer beside a scenic western Montana river, leaving some cars off the tracks in a narrow, century-old tunnel with limited access, officials said.

"It's a terrible spot to get in and out of," Bill Naegeli, manager for Sanders County Disaster and Emergency Services, said of the derailment on the Clark Fork River. "The biggest issue is the cars derailed inside the tunnel" with little clearance.

Montana Rail Link has said nobody was hurt and no hazardous materials spilled Sunday morning in the derailment that left some cars precariously close to the banks of the river and some slightly dipping into the water in an area where the railroad tracks run between the base of the mountain and the river.

Seven cars are believed derailed in the narrow tunnel, where it will be hard to extricate them, Naegeli said.

The train derailed Sunday across the river from Quinn's Hot Springs Resort in Paradise, spilling the clay and cases of Coors Light and Blue Moon beer, in cans and bottles, the Missoulian reported.

A tanker car carrying butane was on its side, but it did not leak, Naegeli said.

A boom was deployed across the river to secure any cans or bottles of beer that enter the water and to monitor for any possible diesel impacts after a small amount of fuel spilled on the dirt from two refrigerator cars that derailed, said Andy Garland, spokesperson for Montana Rail Link, in a statement Monday.

"MRL has been in communication with both local and federal authorities and will conduct any necessary site remediation, including impacted soil removal in coordination with [the state Department of Environmental Quality]," Garland said.

Directly across the winding river, some of Quinn's guest cabins were evacuated as a precaution, the Plains-Paradise Rural Fire District said in a social media post.

Denise Moreth, the resort's general manager, told the Missoulian that front desk workers heard a "loud, rumbling crash, and then they heard the train derailment."

Garland said Sunday it was unclear how long it would take to remove the derailed cars and repair the tracks and railroad bed, which appeared to have been damaged when the cars slid off the tracks. Crews were working in the area on Monday.

The derailment area can be reached only by vehicles traveling on the blocked railroad track or by taking a boat across the river, Garland said Sunday.

The cause of the derailment is still under investigation, officials said.

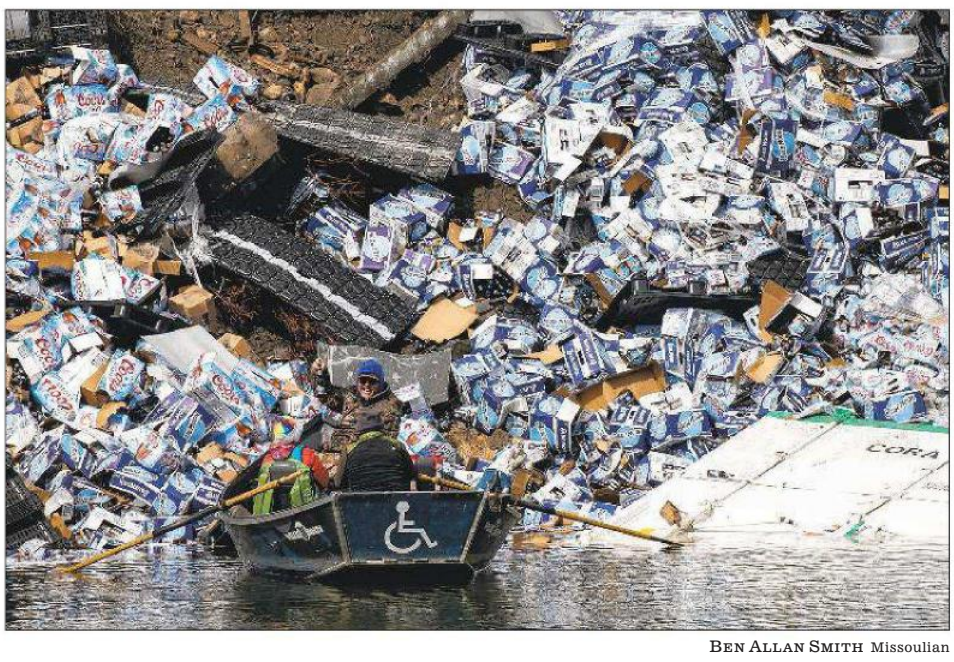
Federal regulators and members of Congress are urging railroads to do more to prevent derailments after recent fiery wrecks involving hazardous chemicals in Ohio and Minnesota prompted evacuations.

Rail accidents including derailments have been trending downward in the U.S. as the number of miles traveled by trains decreases.

However, the rate of accidents per mile has been increasing, according to the Federal Railroad Administration.

Railway unions contend rail transportation has become riskier in recent years following widespread job cuts.

Most rail accidents involve freight trains.



BEN ALLAN SMITH Missoulian

A GROUP of fishermen claims a bottle of beer from a derailed railcar along the banks of the Clark Fork River, west of St. Regis, Mont., on Sunday.

ANDA CHU Bay Area News Group

RESIDENTS of Martinez, northeast of San Francisco, say they didn't learn until months after a local refinery's accidental release of a hazardous material that they shouldn't be eating the produce they grow.

A quest for answers after Bay Area refinery fallout

Delayed alert on hazard angers Martinez residents

BY TONY BRISCOE

It was the morning after Thanksgiving when residents in the Bay Area city of Martinez awoke to find their homes, cars and yards blanketed by a mysterious pale residue.

Although the dusting resembled ash, there were no wildfires nearby. When residents called local authorities, they learned nothing.

But then, more than a month later, the Contra Costa County Health Department published a two-page notice informing residents that the "white dust" was a hazardous material released by Martinez Refining Co. on the northern edge of the city.

The health advisory told residents that they should contact health providers if they were experiencing coughing or difficulty breathing, and that the health department recommended not eating food grown in soil that was exposed to the material.

Today, residents of this tightknit community about 25 miles northeast of San Francisco are still demanding to know what risks they face after 20 tons of spent catalyst were lofted over area homes, and why it's been so hard to get answers.

While the county has launched an investigation into why the refinery failed to issue an alert, residents have accused county health officials of failing to properly inform residents of potential health hazards long after the incident. They say that an initial Jan. 11 health notice was seen by too few people, and

[See **Fallout,** B4]

L.A. County leaders ditch proposal to overhaul jails

A motion to reduce the population behind bars had met with widespread criticism.

BY KERI BLAKINGER

In 2021, in the midst of the pandemic, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved an ambitious two-year plan to close the dungeon-like Men's Central Jail. The idea was to decrease the number of people in custody countywide by several thousand and shut down the aging facility bit by bit.

But two years have come and gone, and the total jail population still hovers around 14,000. The notorious downtown lockup — now 60 years old — is still open. And no one seems to agree on a path forward.

This week, the board was set to consider a motion declaring the county's jails a "humanitarian crisis" and outlining a set of recommendations to help fix that.

But the plan — labeled as a motion to "Depopulate and Decarcerate the Los Angeles County Jails" — drew criticism from justice reformers and law enforcement alike. The former said it lacked concrete deadlines for an eventual shutdown of the county's most decrepit lockup, while the latter said that what the county really needs is not fewer jails but more modern jails.

So on Monday afternoon — on the heels of several letters, news releases and a rally — Supervisor Hilda Solis pulled the item from this week's agenda.

"Never did we once expect for people to come out and pick this thing apart as they did," she told The Times, adding that she was "not happy" about the difficulties moving forward, especially given the troubling recent trajectory of several lawsuits over the county's bad jail conditions.

"I chose to move because I am very fearful that we may go into receivership," she said.

A spokesperson for Supervisor Lindsey Horvath, who co-authored the motion with Solis, did not respond to a request for comment.

The Sheriff's Department, meanwhile, offered a statement late Monday saying it was still working to assess the impact of the motion and affirming its commitment to addressing the "many challenges we all face in our jail system."

As originally proposed, the seven-page motion would have declared a humanitarian crisis in the Los Angeles jails and required the county "to move with all deliberate speed on meaningful solutions."

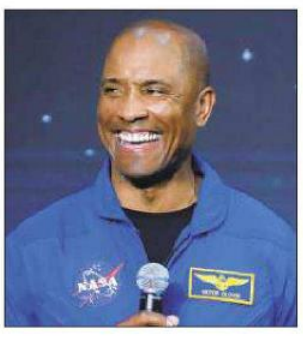
One proposed solution involved asking local law enforcement to consider using a cite-and-release system, allowing people to walk free immediately after certain low-level arrests instead of being booked into jail. An-

[See **Jails,** B2]

SoCal native among 4 astronauts picked for lunar mission

Victor Glover, from Pomona, will pilot the Artemis II rocket set to launch in 2024.

BY GRACE TOOHEY



MICHAEL WYKE Associated Press

VICTOR Glover at the Artemis announcement.

Almost 30 years after he graduated from Ontario High School in Southern California, Victor Glover will become one of only a select few astronauts — and the first person of color — to embark on a NASA mission to the moon.

Glover was selected to pilot NASA's history-making Artemis II mission, expected to take off next year to circle the moon before returning to Earth in 10 days, according to a news release from NASA.

The crew will have three other astronauts, including the first woman and the first Canadian to go on a lunar mission — Christina Hammock Koch and Jeremy Hansen, who will serve as mission specialists — and Reid Wiseman, who will command the mission. Hansen is with the Canadian Space Agency, which has partnered with NASA on the mission.

"We have a lot to celebrate, and it's so much more than the four names that have been announced; we need to celebrate this moment in human history," Glover said Monday at a livestreamed NASA event announcing the crew for the mission. "It is the next step on the journey that gets humanity to Mars."

The Artemis II mission builds off the success of Artemis I, which was an unmanned deep space rocket and spacecraft. The four astronauts will circle the moon, traveling 600,000 miles round-trip at 30 times the speed of sound, accord-

[See **Glover,** B2]

Effort to recall Kevin de León comes up short

An Eagle Rock resident says she doesn't have enough signatures in her bid to oust the City Council member. **B3**

20 officers may lose their badges

California releases a list of police officers who could be decertified after misconduct allegations. **B3**

Lottery **B2**

Richard Alarcon knows scandal — and he has thoughts

Former L.A. power broker is irked by city's politicians

GUSTAVO ARELLANO

Black hat. Black pants. Black jacket. Black hoodie. Gray sneakers ... white sweater?

When I greeted Richard Alarcon last week outside Lenchita's in Pacoima, I wasn't sure if he was in a witness protection program or getting ready for a DJ gig.

Maybe both?

The former L.A. power broker lives in an apartment in Chatsworth and works as a real estate agent, consultant and van driver taking children to medical appointments. It's a life far removed from when he ushered in a new era of representation by becoming the first Latino to represent the San Fernando Valley on the L.A. City Council in 1993, then the first Latino state senator from the area in 1998.

The legacy of his trailblazing efforts: Latino power in the Valley stretches from the L.A. Unified School District Board of Education, where Kelly Gonez of North Hollywood served as president from 2020 to 2022, to Capitol Hill, where Pacoima native Alex Padilla is the first Latino to represent California as a U.S. senator.

That all ended in 2010, when a grand jury indicted Alarcon and his then-wife on charges of voter fraud. L.A. County prosecutors alleged that the two lied about living in a beat-up Panorama City house, when their primary residence was a nicer home in Sun Valley, outside the council district Alarcon represented.

Alarcon, a Valley native, maintained that they weren't living in the Panorama City house because they

[See **Arellano,** B2]

Job training in college in their language

Classes are taught in Spanish, Russian, Korean — a boon for immigrants, campuses.

BY DEBBIE TRUONG, SELENE RIVERA AND JEONG PARK

When a friend asked Andrea White Rubio if she was interested in caring for an 84-year-old man with early dementia and diabetes during the pandemic, she considered her job options. She had scrambled for months, working as a fruit vendor or going door to door selling shoes from a catalog.

She agreed and, after two years on the job, found a new calling.

IRFAN KHAN Los Angeles Times

SANDRA CERVANTES, left, and other students learn in a class taught in Spanish at L.A. City College.

"I have always had direct contact with people, but this time my mission was to be able to help people, many whose families cannot help," the 50-year-old said. "I think God put me on that path."

That's how Rubio found herself in a classroom at Los Angeles City College on a recent Friday, learning how to become an in-home support worker. But there was something distinct about this class: It was taught entirely in Spanish.

In a move to boost sagging community college enrollment and address student demand for job-ready education opportunities, Los Angeles Community College campuses are experimenting with a new genre of courses taught in

[See **Classes,** B5]

SPORTS ON THE BACK: After rocky Lakers stint, Westbrook fits in with Clippers. **B10**

Under pressure, supervisors withdraw jail plan

[**Jails,** from B1]
other entailed advocating for the elimination of bail on certain low-level offenses — much like the emergency "zero-bail" schedule used to reduce the jail population for the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

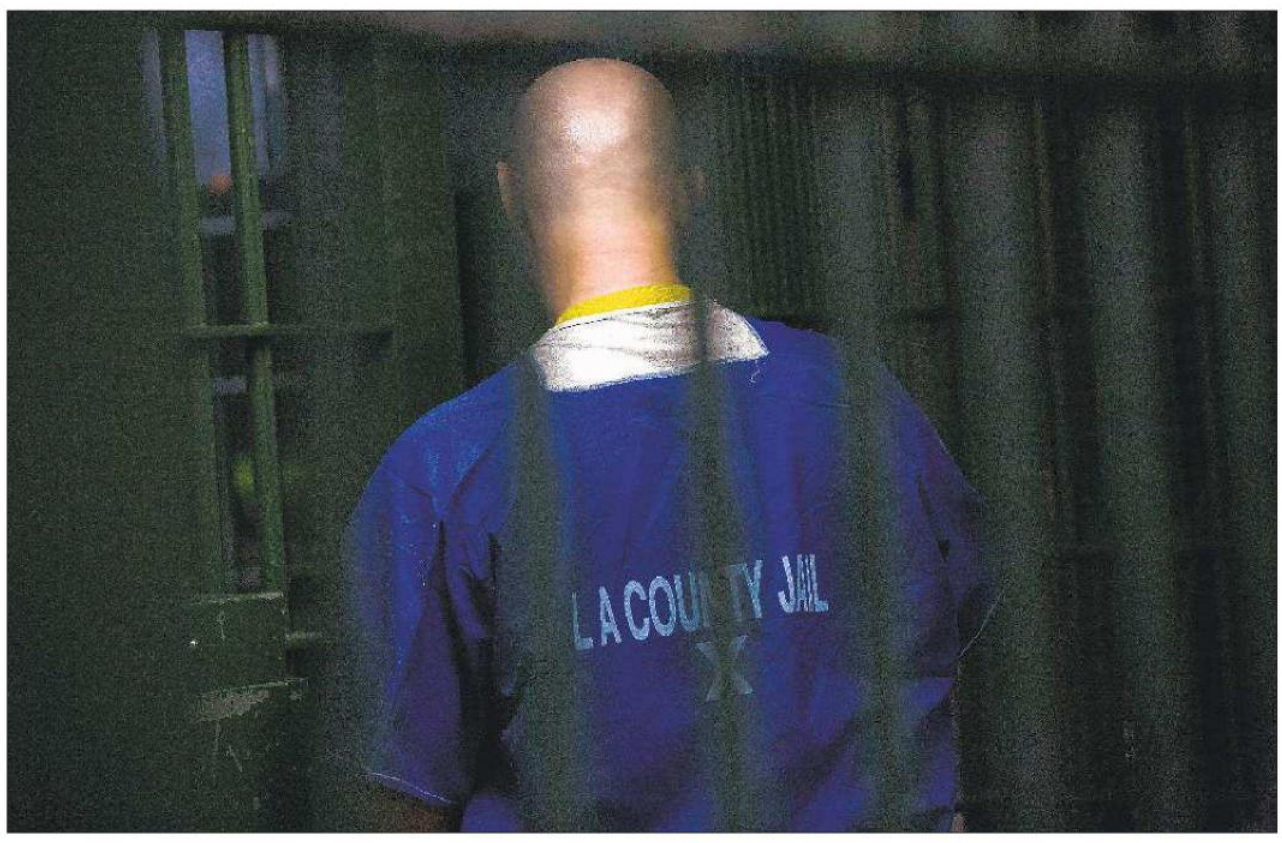
Those suggestions seemed to draw the most attention from parties on both sides of the issues. But the motion also included other ideas, such as finding a different risk assessment tool to evaluate who can safely be released; increasing the use of pretrial release with electronic monitoring; advocating for legislative changes to allow for more compassionate release; and asking the state to transfer people who've already been sentenced to prison and now make up roughly 10% of the jail population.

While reform advocates lauded suggestions such as increasing the use of cite-and-release and returning to zero-bail policies, they took issue with expanding the use of electronic monitoring, which they say has failed to reduce jail populations elsewhere.

On Thursday — a day after the motion first went public — Justice LA, a coalition of community organizations, issued a three-page letter of opposition detailing its concerns.

"This motion does not reflect good governance," the coalition wrote, calling it a "kitchen sink approach" to policy. "Noticeably absent from this motion is a concrete timeline for the closure of Men's Central Jail and benchmarks to measure progress."

The letter went on to fault the board for not getting community input, failing to recognize the "threat of deputy gangs," relying too much on the Sheriff's Department to implement key components and not including accountability mechanisms.



LIZ MOUGHON Los Angeles Times

AN INMATE walks back to his cell at Men's Central Jail in Los Angeles. Reform advocates took issue with several aspects of the plan, including a proposal to reduce jail populations by using more electronic monitoring.

"The Jail Closure Implementation Team was established almost two years ago and there has been no impact on the jail population," the groups wrote. "In fact, in that time, conditions in the jail have only become ever more dangerous, as evidenced by the three deaths that occurred in the past 10 days."

At a rally that same day outside the county's Hall of Administration, attorneys, reform advocates and jail survivors spoke to a peaceful crowd about many of the same concerns outlined in the coalition letter.

"The motion does not adopt the plan put forward two years ago to close the jail," said Melissa Camacho, a senior staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California. "That plan created a road map for the county to be able to close the jail in 24 months. If the county had implemented that plan, rather than moving for a humanitarian crisis, they would be moving to proclaim victory."

Over the weekend, the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs' Assn. issued a statement of opposition, and the vice president of the local prosecutors association criticized the motion in an interview with Fox News. On Monday, the Assn. for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs released a statement panning the proposal as well.

"This motion represents a confusing mix of ideas," Richard Pippin, president of the deputy sheriffs group, said in the statement. "With regard to their no-jail concept, we all hope that one day there will be a lesser need to incarcerate people, but today's reality is that Los Angeles needs modern jails capable of humanely and responsibly housing those who pose a threat to our society."

Then, minutes before Solis withdrew the motion, Supervisor Janice Hahn waded into the fray, saying she too did not support it.

"I have concerns with this proposal and its potential impact on public safety," she wrote. "Any plan to reduce the population of our jails needs to be decided in partnership with law enforcement, our deputy district attorneys, and our courts."

When Solis issued a statement Monday morning withdrawing the motion, she reiterated her concerns about the need to move quickly, given the "horrid" conditions and pending litigation. The lack of concrete deadlines in the proposal, she said, was because significant population reductions would require cooperation with other elected officials as well as the state.

"The authority and responsibility to close Men's Central Jail does not rest solely with the Board of Supervisors," she wrote. "The Board of Supervisors has limited jurisdiction and authority over the safe decarceration and diversion of those in County jails, as these authorities lie largely with the Los Angeles Superior Court, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), and the Los Angeles County Sheriff."

Now, she said, her office will gather more input from stakeholders before finding a path forward.

To Sam Lewis, a former prisoner who is now executive director of the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, the decision to pull the motion represents a loss to people who are currently incarcerated — especially those who are stuck behind bars and don't have a chance to get out with electronic monitoring. The motion, he said, could have opened up that possibility for some of them.

"Was it perfect? No. But we have an imperfect system," he said. "Making real substantive change takes a bit of time. Sadly, people that are incarcerated still have to wait."

Richard Alarcon has thoughts on city politics

[**Arellano,** from B1]
were remodeling it. A jury in 2014 found them both guilty, and Alarcon spent 51 days under house arrest before an appeals court overturned the conviction. In 2019, then-Dist. Atty. Jackie Lacey said she wouldn't refile the case, and Alarcon slunk into obscurity.

Yet he was all smiles when we met up: The following day was his daughter's quinceañera, and he had just gone shopping.

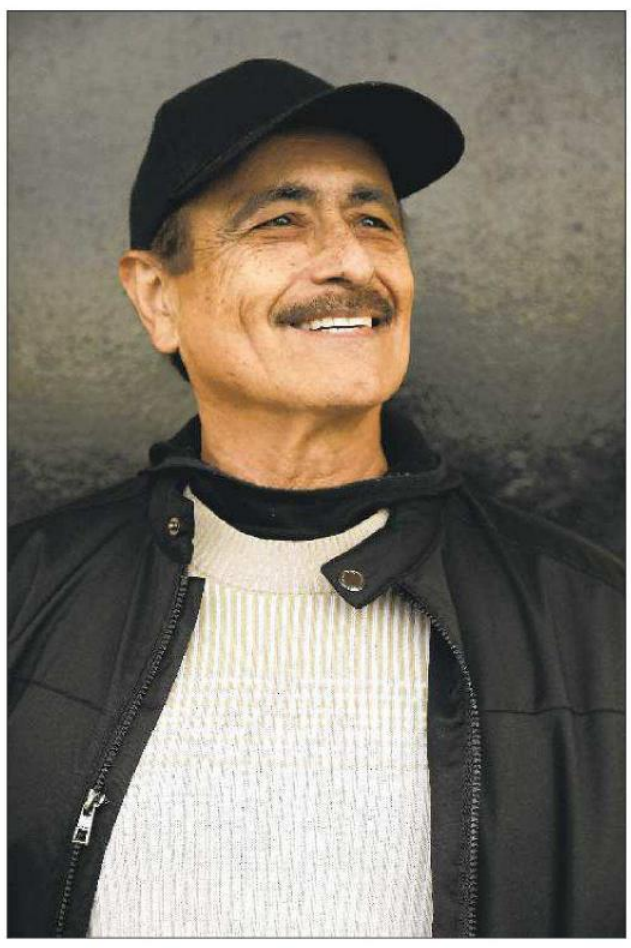
"I got a million ties, but not a gold one," Alarcon said as he showed me a photo of her on his phone. "I don't wear ties anymore." I told him he looked young for someone approaching 70. Alarcon laughed.

"Oh, I'm old," he replied. "I feel it."

Alarcon reached out to me a couple of weeks ago to take issue with my *columna* lumping him with disgraced Eastside politicos. I offered to hear him out and also to ask his thoughts about city politics at a time when his residency scandal seems like a hubristic error by comparison.

The day before we met, a jury had convicted political giant Mark Ridley-Thomas on charges of federal bribery, conspiracy and fraud involving votes he cast as an L.A. County supervisor in favor of USC after the university brought on his son as a student and professor. Earlier this year, former Councilmember Jose Huizar pleaded guilty in his corruption case, about a year after former Councilmember Mitchell Englander finished a federal prison sentence for his own corruption scandal.

Those fiascoes were overtaken in the public eye by Alarcon's worker-turned-enemy, L.A. City Council President Nury Martinez. She resigned in October in the wake of a leaked recording that caught her spewing nasty remarks about Black people, Oaxacans and political opponents. A special election for her replacement is happening Tuesday, but turnout is expected to be dismally low, in part because too many constituents have lost faith in politicians.



GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

RICHARD ALARCON blazed trails on the L.A. City Council and in the state Senate before his indictment.

There was so much to talk about during our dinner that Alarcon barely touched his chile verde or sipped on his horchata. He was calm and soft-spoken, with a good laugh. He's confident that history will judge him kindly.

"People should Google me and see what I did, once they get through all the crap," Alarcon said.

He maintains that the case against him was politically motivated, although he declined to go on the record about why. I told him it was foolish that he let a residency issue ruin a career that otherwise saw no big scandals — certainly nothing on the level of Ridley-Thomas, Huizar and Englander. Or even Martinez.

"People knew: Don't come and offer me something that's illegal," he said. "I have pride about having that kind of record — and then this [conviction]?" He threw his hands in the air.

"But you know what? I didn't always feel this way — I mean, it takes time to go through the process — but eventually, I came to a place where I realized, 'You did a lot of good things.' "

I moved on to Ridley-Thomas' conviction.

"Very sad," Alarcon replied. "He was a very good friend, and he did a lot of great things, and I know what it's like to be in his position."

Did he think the charges were overblown, like many of Ridley-Thomas' supporters have asserted?

"I have to admit, I was troubled by the donation," he replied, referring to a $100,000 contribution to a nonprofit run by Sebastian Ridley-Thomas. Prosecutors claimed that the elder Ridley-Thomas' campaign committee funneled the money through USC.

"But everything else I thought was par for the course," he added, "because anybody representing that area encompassing USC would have provided support to USC — anybody. So he was just doing things for USC that any politician would have done."

Alarcon, who was an aide to Mayor Tom Bradley before his first stint on the City Council, nevertheless said that "greed" now governs L.A. politics like nothing he's ever seen, adding, "Each time you look at it, there's different motivations."

That's when he brought up Martinez, who worked under him for a decade. "She was very quick to anger. That was her personality. So I wasn't shocked" at the tenor of her remarks, he said. But he was "saddened that there was racism," which he claimed Martinez had never revealed around him — probably because he has an Afro-Latina granddaughter.

"Which would show that she's sharp enough," he continued. "But why would she think that Kevin and Gil would put up with that? That was also disappointing."

"Kevin and Gil," of course, are Kevin de León and Gil Cedillo, who served alongside Alarcon in Sacramento and were council members when they were in the room with Martinez, making *pendejo* remarks of their own while saying nothing to curb her.

"They're very good friends of mine. Honestly, if somebody had said [racist remarks in front of] me when I was in the room, I would have told them to *shut up*," Alarcon said.

I asked about the District 6 special election. Alarcon is supporting Marisa Alcaraz, his former deputy. But the lack of experience common to the seven candidates — none has held elected office — worries him.

"People don't realize the politicians don't have control over their jobs," he said. "L.A.'s bureaucracy is tough. You have to finagle. You have to cajole. You have to outflank them to get them to do what you think needs to be done."

He hopes that whoever wins District 6, along with the new progressive generation of L.A. politicians like Councilmembers Eunisses Hernandez and Hugo Soto-Martinez, "learn some of the lessons" of what greed can do to a political career and their constituents and "avoid those situations."

That includes his daughter Andrea Alarcon, who last year won a seat on the Palmdale City Council. It's an unlikely comeback for the former president of L.A.'s Board of Public Works, who resigned in 2013 after leaving her then-11-year-old daughter alone at City Hall while she partied with friends nearby.

"I'm living vicariously through her," Alarcon said of his daughter. He didn't work much on her campaign, other than to offer the following advice: "I explained to her, 'You know you're going to get hit with all the stuff that's going to come at you.' And she said of course she knew that. And I said, 'So how are you going to overcome it?' "

I had chewed my chile rellenos to nubs. I had two more questions for Alarcon.

Should De León heed the call of political leaders and activists to resign?

"The simple answer would be, 'Yes, you should resign.' But the more difficult question is, 'What would you do in this position?' I don't know what I would do," Alarcon said.

Um, OK.

He described De León as a "good person" who isn't racist but should've "spoken out" against Martinez during their conversation. He advised De León to file a claim against Jason Reedy, the activist whose altercation with the council member at a holiday toy giveaway ended with De León shoving him into a table.

I scoffed and moved on to my finale: What lessons can Angelenos take from Alarcon's life, given that he seems to be at peace with it?

"That might be a bit of an exaggeration," he said with a laugh.

He told me about a gift his mother gave him at his Cal State Northridge graduation. It was a letter his sixth-grade teacher had written to her, saying her son would be a "failure in life" because he was too disruptive.

"And I looked at my mom, and I said, 'Why didn't you show me this letter?' She said, 'Because I never stopped believing in you.' ... I think that too many people give up on people when they make a mistake too soon."

So, did L.A. give up on you, Richard?

"It's like anything else. They like you before; they don't like you now. I don't think they abandoned me. It's just that there was a new generation coming up. I served for 20 years. That's more than most."

We got up, paid for our dinners and took off into the evening. I made sure to pass by the site of the Panorama City house where Alarcon's political fortunes sank, just a few minutes from Lenchita's. It's now a gated collection of homes developed by his former wife.

A political legacy, thrown away for a subdivision. May the Valley's next generation of Latino politicians be better than this.

Lottery results

Tonight's Mega Millions
Estimated jackpot: $385 million
Sales close at 7:45 p.m.

For Monday, April 3, 2023

Powerball
Powerball number is **bold**

16-30-31-54-68—**Powerball 1**
Jackpot: $159 million

Fantasy Five: 1-4-14-23-27

Daily Four: 8-0-9-5

Daily Three (midday): 8-5-7

Daily Three (evening): 1-5-2

Daily Derby:
(2) Lucky Star
(5) California Classic
(4) Big Ben
Race time: 1:46.85

Results on the internet:
www.latimes.com/lottery
General information:
(800) 568-8379
(Results not available at this number)

Pomona native on NASA's next lunar mission

[**Glover,** from B1]
ing to NASA.

"Four names, four explorers ... answering the call to once more rocket away from Earth and chart a course around the moon," said Joe Acaba, chief astronaut at NASA.

The mission is not supposed to land on the moon, but it would be the closest that humans have gotten to the lunar landscape in more than 50 years. It's part of NASA's mission to establish a "long-term presence at the moon" as well as a pathway to Mars.

"The largest, most powerful rocket in the world is going to propel them onward and upward," Bill Nelson, NASA administrator, said at the event Monday. "Artemis II will carry the hopes of millions of people around the world.... We will show what is possible when we dare to reach distant cosmic shores."

Glover was born in Pomona and graduated from Ontario High in 1994. He earned his bachelor's degree in 1999 from California Polytechnic State University, according to his biography. He has lived around the nation and the world as a naval aviator, and he became a trained astronaut in 2015.

Artemis II will be Glover's second spaceflight. He previously served as the pilot on NASA's SpaceX Crew-1, which landed in May 2021 after 168 days in space.

Glover is married with four children.

"This mission paves the way for the expansion of human deep space exploration and presents new opportunities for scientific discoveries, commercial, industry and academic partnerships and the Artemis Generation," said Vanessa Wyche, director of NASA's Mission Control Center in Houston.

Artemis II is expected to launch from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida before splashing down in the Pacific Ocean off San Diego 10 days later.

The lunar exploration program, named after Apollo's mythological twin sister, hopes to land humans on the moon as early as 2025.

State lists police who face losing badges

California could decertify 20 officers who are accused of serious misconduct.

By Richard Winton

Twenty California police officers face possible decertification by the state's law enforcement accreditation body, a move that would strip them of a license to carry a badge in the state.

Unless they are cleared by the Commission of Peace Officer Standards and Training, or POST, investigation or succeed in an appeal, the officers accused of serious misconduct — including sexual misconduct, fraud, excessive force and abuse on duty — will not be able to work as sworn officers for any California police agency. This is in additionto whatever actions prosecutors or their own departments take against them.

The public list is the first since California became the latest state to implement a process for decertifying police officers for serious misconduct. The legislation was enacted in 2021, and the author, state Sen. Steven Bradford (D-Gardena) said it was needed to prevent officers who are fired or resign during misconduct investigations from moving to another police agency.

In most cases on the list, the officers were suspended pending the completion of an investigation by POST investigators. A POST advisory board will decide the officers' fate. A temporary suspension can last up to three years. Officers convicted of a felony will be barred from working as a peace officer again in California.

The law enforcement officers on the list include police from San Bernardino, San Francisco, Stockton, Rohnert Park and Redwood City as well as Sonoma, San Diego, Kern and San Bernadino counties.

Some of the temporary suspensions are for allegations of serious crimes. Nicholas Bloed, a Stockton police officer, was arrested in November on multiple sexual assault charges, including assault, sodomy and oral copulation by use of force. He was temporarily suspended Feb. 15.

San Bernardino Police Officer Fidel Ocampo Rodarte was suspended March 1 after his arrest in November on suspicion of firing his service weapon into the air outside the Dogwood Tavern on Highway 189 in San Bernardino County. A search warrant was served at his home.

Another San Bernardino police officer, Sonny Aguilera, was given a temporary suspension last month, but no public information is available about an arrest or charges. San Bernardino officials did not return a message seeking to determine if he was still employed.

In Rohnert Park, Officer Joseph Huffaker has been temporarily suspended and charged with extortion after he was accused of illegally seizing cannabis from drivers during traffic stops and later falsifying records to cover up his actions. Another former officer in Rohnert Park, Brendon "Jacy" Tatum, was convicted of three federal charges for being the ringleader in the traffic stops and has been deemed ineligible to serve.

San Francisco Police Officers Kevin Lyons and Kevin Sien have been temporarily suspended after they were arrested last year in connection with the destruction of evidence. They're accused of destroying credit cards, identification records and suspected methamphetamine discovered in the luggage of a person in a hotel.

Lyons and Sien allegedly said cataloging the evidence would take too long and instead disposed of the credit cards and IDs in a shred bin and flushed the drugs down a toilet, according to federal court criminal complaints.

Gina Ferazzi Los Angeles Times

DOG DAY AFTERNOON

Neal Levin walks his dog, Frankie, on Monday in his Mammoth Lakes neighborhood where homes are barely visible because of the volume of snow that has fallen during the winter and spring. **WEATHER, B6**

Surplus of water has filled many of the state's depleted reservoirs

Central California's San Luis is at 98% full after being at quarter capacity in December.

By Terry Castleman

California's reservoirs have been in the spotlight after months of precipitation and the end of the drought in much of the state.

A surplus of water has filled several major reservoirs, which had seen perilously low levels.

Among them is the San Luis Reservoir, which sat at just one-quarter of its capacity on Dec. 1. The basin is now 98% full.

The reservoir, California's fifth-largest, is near Los Banos in Merced County and supplies water to the State Water Project.

After a stunning turnaround, it sits at 114% of its historical average level.

In spring 2022, the reservoir's water level was well under half of capacity. Over the summer, warmer weather dried out the landscape.

The reservoir continued to lose water through the fall, ultimately settling at around 25% of capacity through November and December.

A year earlier, before meager winter rains, the San Luis Reservoir had dropped to a staggering 10% of capacity in November 2021.

But this year has been a different story.

Atmospheric rivers have delivered incredible amounts of rain and snow, bringing record snowpack in the Sierra Nevada, the resurrection of Lake Oroville and dangerous flooding across the state.

Most of the state's reservoirs are now at or above their historical average levels.

As of March 28, state reservoirs stood at about 73% capacity, above the 30-year average of 69% for the month of March.

All the water came from a remarkable winter of storms.

It resulted in perhaps the deepest snowpack recorded in more than 70 years, officials said Monday.

The snowpack is so deep that it currently contains roughly 30 million acre-feet of water — or more water than Lake Mead, the nation's largest reservoir, according to a Times analysis of snow sensor data.

Dead gray whale found on beach has scientists worried about trend

It probably died after colliding with a boat in the Bay Area last month, scientists say.

By Grace Toohey

A 35-foot gray whale washed up on a Bay Area beach last month — the first such fatality in the region this year — adding to the concern scientists have over the health of the species.

The whale probably died after colliding with a boat, according to scientists with the Marine Mammal Center in Sausalito, Calif., who conducted a necropsy.

The team was alerted to the whale found on Bolinas Beach east of Duxbury Point in Marin County on March 23 — likely the day the whale died, according to a news release from the Marine Mammal Center.

The whale's death is the latest in a concerning trend that prompted the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in 2019 to declare an "unusual mortality event" for the species living and migrating along North America's Pacific Coast after an alarming number of gray whales began washing up from Mexico to Alaska.

"Gray whales are ocean sentinels due to their adaptability and foraging habits. They have a lot to tell us about the health of the ocean, so to see the species continue to face the added threats of human interaction should concern all of us," Pádraig Duignan, director of pathology at the Marine Mammal Center, said in a statement.

"This case reinforces the need for us to continue to perform both observational research of live whales as well as necropsy investigations so that this critical data can be shared with key decision-makers to find actionable solutions."

The whale found in late March was identified as a 35-foot subadult male, meaning it still hadn't reached its full size. The necropsy found bruising and hemorrhaging in the soft tissue on the left side of the whale's head, which officials called signs of blunt-force trauma "consistent with vessel collision," the statement said. However, the researchers noted that, based on its fat stores and blubber layer, the whale didn't appear to be malnourished, as has been the case for most of the whales found stranded in recent years.

Scientists are hopeful the whale's otherwise good health could be an indicator that the species is doing better compared with recent years, when populations have fallen drastically and birthrates have dropped.

"It was a relief to see this young male gray whale in such good body condition with a thick layer of blubber and lots of fat and oil," said Moe Flannery, senior collections manager of ornithology and mammalogy at the California Academy of Sciences, which assisted with the necropsy.

Since this season's first sighting of a gray whale drew headlines Feb. 8, the center has documented at least four other live gray whale sightings in the Bay Area, the statement said.

Each year, gray whales migrate from the protected warm lagoons of Mexico's Baja Peninsula to the cold waters of the Arctic, where they feed for months before returning to the warmer waterways to mate, give birth and nurse their calves.

It's a 12,000-mile round-trip migration that takes them through shipping lanes, near fishing or tourist boats and occasionally into jaws of hungry orcas.

The bulk of the whales found beached since 2019 have been malnourished. The two other leading causes of death have been entanglement in fishing line or trauma from vessel strikes, the center said.

Seven gray whales and three humpbacks were found dead on Bay Area beaches in 2022, according to the center.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife recently decided to prohibit commercial Dungeness crabbing off much of its coast in an effort to protect humpback whales after recording several entanglements last spring. The change will take effect April 15, stretching from the Sonoma County-Mendocino County area to the U.S.-Mexico border.

Fiery car crash in Hollywood leaves 1 dead, 3 injured

By Nathan Solis

One person is dead and three others are seriously injured after a man crashed his vehicle in Hollywood early Monday and ran away from the fiery wreck, according to authorities.

The single-vehicle crash was reported shortly after 2:30 a.m. in the 8200 block of West Sunset Boulevard. The Tesla Model X hit a lamppost and a tree after veering off the road near Sunset and Marmont Lane, according to the Los Angeles Police Department.

The driver abandoned the passengers and the Tesla, which then caught fire, police said. The man got into another vehicle that was believed to be following the Tesla, and he was taken to a hospital, according to the LAPD.

The unidentified man is in critical condition and police are unable to interview him, but officers are positive that he drove the Tesla, police said.

Bystanders pulled two women out of the vehicle, Los Angeles Fire Department spokesperson Brian Humphrey said. A 23-year-old woman and a 24-year-old woman were taken to a hospital in critical and serious condition, respectively, Humphrey said.

Firefighters found the remains of a person who died in the vehicle, Humphrey said. It's unclear how the victims were affiliated with one another.

Multiple witnesses saw the crash and called 911, Humphrey said, but police have not provided a description of the driver. Both county and city of Los Angeles emergency crews responded to the wreck, which happened on the border with West Hollywood.

Video from OnScene.TV showed the burned-out frame of a vehicle smoldering in the road and a damaged palm tree that was struck before the vehicle caught fire.

Effort to recall De León comes up short

By Julia Wick

Friday was a good day for L.A. City Councilmember Kevin de León.

Less than six months ago, it seemed highly unlikely that the embattled politician would finish his term. There were calls for his resignation and equally loud threats to recall him from office. Now, his greatest political threat appears to be his 2024 reelection.

Despite all the talk, only one recall campaign was ever launched in the aftermath of a leaked audio recording in which De León and three others can be heard making racist comments. That bid was spearheaded by Pauline Adkins, an Eagle Rock resident who had targeted De León with three previous recall attempts.

Adkins had until Friday to collect the 21,006 valid Council District 14 signatures needed to trigger a recall election and then turn them in to the city clerk. (Realistically speaking, she would have needed to turn in more than 25,000 signatures to have a cushion for those marked invalid.)

But Adkins told The Times on Thursday that she had failed to collect the necessary signatures and wouldn't be submitting anything.

The recall's failure is quite a bullet dodged for De León: Polling conducted in January among registered voters in his district found that 58% would support recalling him from office, compared with 25% who would be opposed and 17% undecided.

Because De León's term doesn't expire until December 2024, it's possible that another recall attempt could come to fruition. But given that the primary election for his seat is in March 2024 and it takes months to move a recall forward, it seems unlikely. (To say nothing of the dwindling energy around such a goal, or the fact that most recall attempts fail.)

And during the months that his foes were failing to gather the needed signatures or muster a cohesive campaign, De León was maintaining a ubiquitous presence in his district.

He has hosted raffles at senior centers, cut the ribbon at a new playground, secured millions in grant funding for his district and handed out thousands of boxes of food, at least some of which were helpfully stamped with his name and photo.

Who knows what that January poll would look like today, or how the numbers might further shift during the months it would take to qualify another recall effort?

"My North Star has always been improving the quality of life for the people I represent. Through thick and thin, our community remains focused on the important battles at hand like homelessness, strengthening our local businesses, and protecting working families," De León said Friday in a statement.

"Today's outcome is proof that for my constituents, actions speak louder than words."

Adkins cited a number of reasons for her failed signature-gathering effort, saying that she had been threatened, abandoned by her volunteer political strategist and belittled as a "crazy old lady" and "Trumpster." (As The Times previously reported, Adkins frequently circulated political messages from pro-Donald Trump accounts on her Facebook page, making her an unlikely recall partner for the largely left-wing activists who have been De León's loudest critics.)

This article originally appeared in L.A. on the Record, The Times' local government newsletter. To subscribe, visit latimes.com/newsletters.

‘Why weren’t we notified sooner?’ residents ask

[**Fallout,** from B1]
that it wasn’t until a second notice was issued March 7 that people realized they shouldn’t be eating fruit from their trees or vegetables from their garden.

“Not only have I been feeding that to my husband, my son and myself, but also to my 90-year-old mother,” said Penny Bristow-Wendt, who lives a mile south of the refinery. “Why weren’t we notified sooner?”

Test samples of the residue revealed such metals as aluminum, barium, chromium, nickel, vanadium and zinc. The testing, however, didn’t distinguish which types of chromium were detected, which could be an important distinction. Hexavalent chromium, for example, is a potent carcinogen that has no safe amount of exposure while trivalent chromium is considered much less toxic.

County health officials have insisted that the most significant health risks were short-term respiratory effects from inhaling the pollution over the two days it was released, and that serious health problems are generally associated with long-term exposure to high concentrations of the material.

They said their alerts were issued out of an abundance of caution.

“It’s sort of a hard balance because you don’t want to unnecessarily scare people,” said Dr. Ori Tzvieli, the county health officer. “But we also don’t want to falsely reassure people. We want to just say, let’s see what the results say and then we’ll have more information for you then.”

Such statements have done little to placate residents. Four months after the release, some are demanding that health officials expedite soil sampling to determine just how far the fallout spread.

“The lack of notification is just unconscionable,” resident Christina Reich said during a recent public hearing. “It’s criminal. And we really need to do better and we need to immediately expedite the testing. We need to find out exactly the full extent of what’s going on, how far out these contaminants have gone, and what effect they have.”

Another resident, who identified himself only as Jeffrey, lamented that he had been eating eggs laid by his chickens, which he keeps at his home.

“This is horrendously late information to say, ‘Hey, maybe you shouldn’t be eating your vegetables,’ ” he said. “How do we know that [the refinery] is going to have any type of accountability? It just seems like the way of this country is for these corporations to do these horrible, awful things to the public and then they get to just wash their hands of it and walk on and do it again a couple of months later.”

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is working on a computer model to determine how far contaminants may have spread, which is expected to help provide a more targeted soil sampling by the county. Meanwhile, the county has assembled an 11-member oversight committee — made up of residents, government officials and refinery representatives — that has been in talks with a firm that could conduct a risk assessment that will include a soil analysis.

Once a contractor is selected, soil sampling can begin, according to local officials. The lab results are expected to be published by early to mid-summer, said Lauren Sugayan, assistant city manager and member of the oversight committee.

Still, residents believe they can’t wait that long. Bristow-Wendt, who has lived in her house since 1998, began growing vegetables in her backyard as a hobby during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as grocery prices ballooned with inflation, she said that it soon became a necessity.

“It was like, ‘Are you kidding me? $3 for zucchini?’ ” she said. “And I don’t see that changing anytime soon.”

Recognizing it would be months to get her soil tested, Bristow-Wendt took it upon herself to test it. She contacted the company that performed the initial sampling of the metal-laden dust for the health department and air district and found that soil in her garden contained elevated levels of aluminum.

Martinez residents have long had a fraught relationship with the refinery, which produces gasoline, asphalt products and jet and diesel fuels. In October 2021, the refinery’s previous owner, Shell Oil Products US, agreed to pay $433,000 to settle 44 notices of violation issued to the company for noncompliance with air quality regulations in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Martinez Refining purchased the refinery from Shell in 2020.

According to officials, problems began four days before Thanksgiving, when the refinery experienced an “upset unit,” a malfunction that caused workers to pause operations. As refining ceased, they turned off emissions control mechanisms that lessen the amount of particles released from smokestacks.

When workers restarted operations, however, the emissions controls were not turned back on. Around 9:30 p.m. Thanksgiving night, the smokestacks began releasing spent catalyst, which results from the breaking down of crude oil.

In the wake of the release, the air district has issued a violation for public nuisance while the county health department has referred two violations to the Contra County district attorney’s office — one for failure to notify the proper authorities of a hazardous material release and one for illicit discharges into the county stormwater system. The district attorney’s office is reviewing the matter and will decide whether to file charges in the coming months, spokesperson Ted Asregadoo said.

A Martinez Refining spokesperson said the company is cooperating with all government agencies and investigations surrounding the Nov. 24 release. “While this incident is still under investigation, we have no further comment at this time,” they said.

In addition to bordering homes, the refinery is roughly 1,000 feet north of a drinking water reservoir that serves the city. County officials say treated water is safe and has continued to meet federal drinking water standards. Any heavy metals in raw water, they say, are removed by treatment processes.

As residents press officials for answers, they have also questioned the county’s and city’s methods of communication. Carlota Canari, who lives less than half a mile south of the refinery with her husband and three sons, wonders why the recommendation about refraining from eating produce from local gardens wasn’t communicated through the community’s emergency alert system.

“How many people have already consumed the oranges or lemons and who knows what else they consume at this time of the year? Or what if they grow vegetables? Asparagus, broccoli — you name it. I don’t know. There’s no answers.”

Sugayan, the assistant city manager, said the city is communicating through an emailed newsletter, its website and social media. And soon, residents will be getting mailed updates on community meetings, which will be included with the water bill.

However, perhaps the greatest predicament facing officials is that conclusive evidence of any contamination is still months away.

“We want nothing more than to reduce fear and anxiety with answers,” Sugayan said. “But, as the health department has said, you have to follow the science. I understand it’s really tough for the public, but we’re doing everything we can to host community meetings, to agendize this and give verbal updates.”

JOHN BROCKINGTON, 1948 - 2023

Star running back in college, NFL became advocate for organ donors

By John Wilkens

John Brockington believed in providence, that what happened to him — the football career, the illness, the kidney donation that was both a love story and a calling — happened for a reason.

“I believe God had all this planned for me,” he once told the San Diego Union-Tribune.

Brockington, who died Friday at UC San Diego Medical Center at age 74, spent the last 20 years as an advocate for organ donations, traveling the country from his home in San Diego to raise awareness.

He hosted galas, rode in the Rose Parade, was invited to the White House, appeared on ESPN — all because of the second chance he’d been given at life.

“I know what I went through,” he said, “and we’re really trying to ease people’s pain here.”

Brockington was born Sept. 7, 1948, and grew up in Brooklyn, N.Y., where his prowess as a football running back attracted a visit by Woody Hayes, the Ohio State coach legendary for his toughness. Brockington was cut from the same cloth, known more for going through defenders than around them.

In college, he helped lead the Buckeyes to an undefeated season and the national championship in 1968. The Green Bay Packers drafted him in the first round in 1971, and he became the first player to rush for more than 1,000 yards in each of his first three NFL seasons.

That success earned him spots in the Pro Bowl three times, including the 1974 game, which held its practices in San Diego. The weather made an impression and, after his final season in 1977, he settled in the city, working in financial investments.

At a deli in Little Italy, he was introduced to Diane Scott, who taught literature at UC San Diego. She had grown up on the Wisconsin-Illinois border, a fan of the Packers, and of Brockington. She remembered being at a rainy Monday night game against the Detroit Lions in 1971 and admiring his relentlessness in the mud.

They became friends, then a couple, then exes over religious differences. In late 2000, they connected again, after Brockington became so ill he could barely walk or breathe. He hadn’t had a physical in 20 years, and when he finally saw a doctor, the news was grim: His kidneys were failing. A transplant was needed, and Scott became his donor. The operation, on Nov. 28, 2001, was a success. Brockington and Scott grew close again and a couple of years later were married.

In early 2004, Brockington marveled at the thread that had saved his life and brought the couple together. “What would have happened if I had played for the Chiefs or Giants or 49ers?” he asked.

“If you had been a 49er,” his wife said, “you wouldn’t have received any of my organs.”

They started the John Brockington Foundation,, a nonprofit that raised awareness about transplants and assisted donors and recipients with transportation, food, rent money and other needs. Diane Brockington said in an interview Monday that it raised almost $1 million over the years before it curtailed operations because of COVID-19.

In 2015, the Brockingtons appeared in the Rose Parade as part of the Donate Life float, which was titled “The Never-Ending Story.” In 2019, they were invited to the White House for a transplant event but couldn’t attend. They were busy in Wisconsin helping to launch a donor-awareness program.

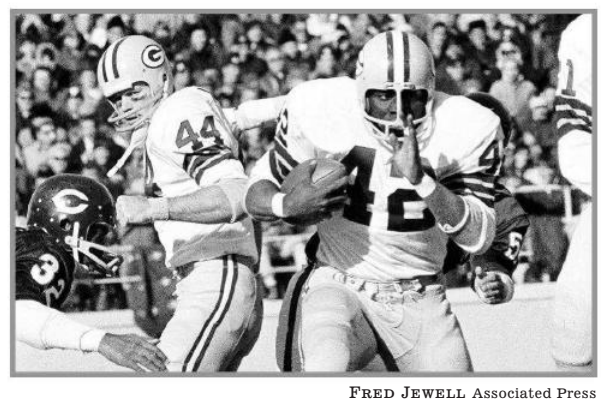
“John helped put a healthy face on being a kidney recipient,” his wife said. “He showed you can be alive and vibrant after a transplant.”

Most donated kidneys last 15 to 20 years, so the one she gave him beat the odds. And it wasn’t his cause of death, she said.

“He had been getting weaker and it was just a general giving-out” after years of immuno-suppressive drugs, she said.

In addition to his wife, survivors include two siblings, Linda Brockington of Brooklyn and Freeman Brockington (hometown unknown); two daughters, Kelly and Ashley Brockington, both of New York; and two stepdaughters, Jessica Cogan of New Orleans and Justine Gunn of Los Angeles.

Wilkens writes for the San Diego Union-Tribune.



Fred Jewell Associated Press

THREE-TIME PRO BOWLER
Green Bay running back John Brockington rushes for a first down against the Chicago Bears in 1971.

MARKETPLACE
JOBS · REAL ESTATE · MORE

latimes.com/placead
To place an ad call 1.800.234.4444
Los Angeles Times

HOW TO PLACE AN AD

Self-service 24/7:
latimes.com/placead

Contact us by phone 24/7:
800-234-4444

ADVERTISING POLICIES
For Los Angeles Times advertising terms and conditions go to:
www.latimes.com/about/la-ads-terms-20181105-htmlstory.html

HOMES FOR SALE 1100

Out of State

Oregon Coast Investment
Home 1acre 5418084173 Pp

Business Names

Fictitious Business Name Statement NO.: 2023028639
The following person is doing business as:
Fictitious Business Name(s) Pacific Fertility Centers Los Angeles 10880 Wilshire Blvd Ste 300, Los Angeles, CA 90024. **Registered Owner** (S): Vicken Sahakian M.D., Inc. 10880 Wilshire Blvd Ste 300, Los Angeles, CA 90024. **Business is conducted by:** a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on **09/2014**. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. (A registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime) **REGISTRANT/CORP/LLC NAME:** Vicken Sahakian M.D., Inc.. **Signature:** Greg Wiles, CFO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of **Los Angeles** County on 2/7/2023. **NOTICE**- in accordance with subdivision (a)of section 17920 A Fictitious Name Statement generally expires at the end of five years from the date on which it was filed in the office of the County Clerk except, as provided in subdivision (b) of section 17920, where it expires 40 days after any change in the facts set forth in the statement pursuant to section 17913 other than a change in the residence address of a registered owner. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before the expiration. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal state or common law (see section 14411 et seq. Business and Professions code). Dean C. Logan, Los Angeles County Clerk. BY: James Ng, Deputy. Published 03/21/23, 03/28/23, 04/04/23, 04/11/23.

You're connected.
Los Angeles Times latimes.com.

Business Names

Legal Notices

SUMMONS (Family Law)
Case No. D22-03281
Notice to Respondent: (Nombre):
Allison Z. Weigel
You have been sued. Read the information below.
Lo han demandado. Lea la informaci6n a continuaci6n.
Petitioner's name is: (Nombre del demandante):
Gregory A. Weigel
You have **30 calendar days** after this Summons and Petition are served on you to file a Response (form FL-120) at the court and have a copy served on the petitioner. A letter or phone call will not protect you. If you do not file your Response on time, the court may make orders affecting your marriage or domestic partnership, your property, and custody of your children. You may be ordered to pay support and attorney fees and costs. For legal advice, contact a lawyer immediately. Get help finding a lawyer at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courts.ca.govlselfhelp), at the California Legal Services website (www.lawhelpca.org), or by contacting your local county bar association. Tiene **30 dias de calendario** despues de haber recibido la entrega legal de esta Citacion y Peticion para presentar una Respuesta (formulario FL-120) ante la corte y efectuar la entrega legal de una copia al demandante. Una carta o llamada telef6nica o una audiencia de la corte no basta para protegerlo. Si no presenta su Respuesta a tiempo, la corte puede dar 6rdenes que afecten su matrimonio o pareja de hecho, sus bienes y la custodia de sus hijos. Lacorte tambien le puede ordenar que pague mantuencion, y honorarios y costos legales. Para asesoramiento legal, pongase en contacto de inmediato con un abogao. Puede obtener informaci6n para encontrar un abogado en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov) en el sitio web de los Servicios Legales de California (www.lawhelpca.org) o poniendose en contacto con el colegio de abogados de su condado.
NOTICE-RESTRAINING ORDERS ARE ON PAGE 2: These restraining orders are effective against both spouses or domestic partners until the petition is dismissed, a judgment is entered, or the court makes further orders. They are enforceable anywhere in California by any law enforcement officer who has received or seen a copy of them.
AVISO - LAS ORDENES DE RESTRICCION SE ENCUENTRAN EN LA PAGINA 2: Las 6rdenes de restricci6n estan en vigencia en cuanto a ambos c6nyuges o miembros de la pareja de hecho hasta que se despida la petici6n, se emita un fallo o la corte de otras 6rdenes. Cualquier agencia del orden publico que haya recibido o visto una copia de estas 6rdenes puede hacerias acatar en cualquier lugar de California.
FEE WAIVER: If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the clerk for a fee waiver form. The court may order you to pay back all or part of the fees and costs that the court waived for you or the other party.
EXENCION DE CUOTAS: Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentaci6n, pida el secretario un formulario de exenci6n de cuotas. La corte puede ordenar que usted pague, ya sea en parte o por completo, las cuotas y costos de la corte previamente exentos a petici6n de usted ode la otra parte.
The name and address of the court are (El nombre y direcci6n de la corte son):
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
751 Pine Street
Martinez, CA 94553
The name, address, and telephone number of the petitioner's attorney, or the petitioner without an attorney, are (El nombre, direcci6n y numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante si no tiene abogado, son):
Virginia L. D. Ekelund
571 Hartz Avenue
Danville, CA 94526
(925)314-2333
Dated: August 15, 2022
/s/by: A Brooks, Deputy
/s/ by: K. Bieker, Clerk
Published in the Los Angeles Times

A baby grand in the baby's room?
Pass it on.
Sell your unwanted items where they'll be appreciated.
latimes.com/marketplace
Los Angeles Times MARKETPLACE
09CL397

You'll find it here.
L.A. Times Classified
Buy it.
Sell it.
Rent it.
Lease it.
Trade it.
Own it.
To advertise, call (800) 234-4444
Los Angeles Times

JUMBLE
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

OHYAO

LUTDA

LIPRAL

HATAYP

Get the free **JUST JUMBLE** app • Follow us on Twitter **@PlayJumble**

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

You can't put a price on this view!
I can see myself playing the Jumble every morning looking out over the park.
You can't get any higher. That goes with the price.
4/4
TO PURCHASE THE PENTHOUSE UNIT ON THE HIGHEST FLOOR, THEY WERE WILLING TO ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: TOOTH FENCE RIDDLE MATURE
Answer: She was very busy and would look for her missing wristwatch when she — FOUND THE TIME

©2023 Tribune Content Agency, LLC All Rights Reserved.

No Dodger games for a year, but worth it for happy couple

By Nathan Solis

Stephani Gutierrez's boyfriend snuck onto the Dodger Stadium outfield to ask for her hand in marriage, and video of the proposal went viral after he was tackled by security.

But she almost missed the romantic, albeit violent, scene.

The Los Angeles Dodgers hosted the Arizona Diamondbacks during their season opener Thursday. It was a brisk night, and Ricardo Juárez didn't know how he would propose to his girlfriend, but he had a ring.

He decided it would have to be at a Dodgers game because of the couple's love for the team.

"My thought was that I would ask her from where we were sitting and, I don't know, that maybe the cameras would look at me so that we would be on the big screen," Juárez said in Spanish during an interview with The Times.

As to why he decided to run onto the field to propose?

"Just show your wives that you love them," Juárez said. "Tell them the truth, always fight, treat them with love and do everything for them, because well, she is the love of your life."

The stunt led to Juarez getting held by Dodgers security, cited and banned from the park for a year.

But in the end, Gutierrez accepted her boyfriend's proposal.

(Gutierrez was identified in a previous Times story by her Instagram handle, Ramona Saavedra.)

A self-described "cachanilla" — a nickname for locals from Mexicali, Baja California — Juárez arrived in California 13 years ago and worked as a dishwasher at a sushi restaurant in Riverside.

His managers were inspired by his work ethic and asked if he wanted to learn how to prepare sushi, said Juárez, 35. Over the years, he worked as a caterer and built a following of loyal customers as a sushi chef.

Gutierrez and Juárez met three years ago on his boat at a party on Lake Perris in Moreno Valley.

She was a single mother of three. He worried that she didn't have anyone to rely on for help. The two spoke over Instagram and started to date.

The couple have a 1-year-old son and a shared love for the Dodgers.

Gutierrez is working to get her degree as a respiratory therapist. Juárez is the family's sole provider.

The couple had talked about getting married before, but their financial situation kept them from taking the leap, Gutierrez said.

They agreed that they would wait for Gutierrez to finish school before getting married.

But Juárez couldn't wait. When a friend invited them to a Dodgers game, Juárez decided that was where he would propose.

"I didn't even have enough money for the [Dodgers] game," he said with a laugh.

Juárez saved to buy a ring; he also borrowed from friends and promised to pay them back. He put money down on a ring from the Curacao department store in San Bernardino, he said.

Before Juarez ran onto the outfield to propose, Gutierrez, 33, was upset with him because he didn't walk her to the restroom during the seventh-inning stretch.

"I was walking back from the bathroom, and he kept calling me and saying, 'You're going to be on TV,' but I couldn't understand what he was saying," she said.

When she got back to her seat, she heard yelling from the stands. That's when she saw Juárez on the field, on one knee, with what looked like a ring in his hand.

"I was looking for Stephani, so she could see that I was asking her to marry me," Juárez said.

On the field, a security guard tackled him to the ground, eliciting shouts and applause from the stands.

"All I could think about was the ring," said Juárez, who dropped it as he was tackled.

Representatives for the Dodgers declined to comment on the incident.

Of the proposal, Gutierrez said, "I barely caught it. I don't even know if I had a chance to be excited. I was so scared about what was going to happen to him."

She ran down the stairs to the field as security guards led Juárez away, amid the roaring crowd.

"I was yelling and telling them in English, 'My ring, my ring,' " Juárez said. "That's the only thing that mattered."

After Juarez was detained by security, Gutierrez pleaded with staff to let him go because he had to work the next day and she had to attend school.

"I told security, please, please," she said. "I told them, 'I don't know what he's thinking. He's drunk.' "

The staff at Dodger Stadium explained that Juárez would be cited and banned for a year but would be released later that night, Gutierrez said.

She admitted that she was scared, because the couple had made their way to the game on a party bus, and their car was parked in Long Beach.

She didn't know exactly where Juárez was being taken, and his phone was low on battery power. Plus, she said, he was probably a bit drunk.

When Juárez was released, police gave him a bag with his possessions. The first thing he did was search for the ring. To his relief, it was in the bag.

A friend picked him up and drove him back to Gutierrez, who was waiting at the party bus.

"We met each other, he got on his knees, and he proposed again," Gutierrez said.

Gutierrez said she took Juárez to the hospital a few days later because he was unable to get out of bed due to pain from the on-field tackle.

Doctors told him he had no broken bones but cleared him to skip work for four days and gave him an injection for inflammation, she said.

Speaking their language in class

[**Classes,** from B1]

the native language of students — Spanish, Korean, Russian. Students can take courses to become automotive technicians, or improve their understanding of child development and keyboarding skills.

The college in East Hollywood is among seven campuses that have expanded such courses this spring, tripling the number to 63 over a year ago.

In 2016, California eliminated a two-decade-old law barring schools from offering bilingual instruction. But such instruction has seldom made its way into higher education. Teaching classes in another language — rather than a bilingual course in which half the instruction is taught in English — is relatively uncommon, said Yasuko Kanno, chair of the language and literacy education department at Boston University.

Many adult immigrants who are not proficient in English might want to get job training or certification in college but are prevented from doing so because of language barriers, she said. Taking those classes in their own language broadens work opportunities.

"For adult immigrants, this is really a game changer," she said, adding she is not aware of any statistics that track how many colleges provide content courses in languages other than English.

For now, the Los Angeles Community College District is offering non-English instruction only for courses that don't count toward credit for an associate's degree — vocational classes in which students can earn certificates in a trade, or classes that prepare them for a GED. The hope is to one day offer classes required for an associate's degree in languages other than English, said Gabriel Buelna, a member of the district's board of trustees.

"We've always been a multilingual society in California," he said. "We're stuck in education policies that say English-only. We're beginning the process in community colleges of redefining the relationship between language and higher education."

In 2006, the state community college chancellor issued a memo that said community colleges may offer classes in non-English languages to students who are not proficient if they are also enrolled in an English acquisition class.

Buelna said it is unclear if the state would help subsidize for-credit classes taught in languages other than English. The district is also trying to determine if credits from classes taught in non-English languages would transfer to four-year colleges and universities.

In the Los Angeles district, the new "in-language" classes are tuition-free, with students only paying the cost for books and other materials.

The community college district is taking the issue up with state lawmakers — Assemblymember Mike Fong (D-Alhambra) is sponsoring a bill on behalf of the district that would authorize community colleges to offer courses taught in languages other than English without requiring students to simultaneously learn English.

Buelna said the demand for non-English classes is clear. In survey responses from more than 2,500 students, 74% said they spoke Spanish at home and 66% said they are interested in taking courses not taught in English. About 55% of students who participated in the survey were Latino, and nearly 60% were first-generation students.

Patricia Gandara, a research professor of education at UCLA, said she is not aware of any legal restrictions that would prevent community colleges from providing instruction in languages other than English.

"If a student's stronger language can be used, that increases their understanding of what is going on," Gandara said

Controversy over non-English instruction erupted in the 1980s when the English-only movement pushed for local and federal laws that mandated English as the national language. Proponents feared that English would be displaced by other languages, especially Spanish.

But decades later, attitudes about non-English instruction are shifting as dual-language programs in K-12 public schools have gained popularity.

"We have very strong communities in Armenian and Korean, as well as Spanish and other languages," Gandara said. "These communities are interested in their kids being able to speak the language of the community as well as English. So I think that very much has a big impact on attitudes."

At Los Angeles City College, Vanessa Salitrero, a student enrolled in the in-home support service course, said she feels more prepared to work in the field by learning skills in Spanish.

"If I take the classes in English, I will capture half of what they teach me since it is not my first language," she said.

Two decades ago in Mexico, Salitrero sacrificed her goal of becoming a lawyer to care for her sick grandparents. She now cares for her aging parents and hopes to eventually share her caregiving abilities with others.

"I like this career because it makes me remember how beautiful it is to serve," she said.

Professor Carlos Brown said most of the students are women who have recently immigrated to the country or are returning to school after their children have finished school.

Some want a career change, but others are preparing to become caregivers to their parents or other family members. Several students, he said, have also opted to enroll in the version of the class taught in English.

"They're learning something on Friday, and then Monday they hear the same class in English," he said.

The courses are a path to more stability for Flor Aguirre. The 46-year-old said she struggled to find a job after immigrating to the United States less than a year ago, despite holding college degrees from a university in Guatemala and building a successful sales career there.

"I'm still learning English, and I don't want to get stuck because of it," said Aguirre, who immigrated with her husband so their 17-year-old daughter would have more life opportunities. "I also understand that learning this course in English is paramount, but for now this is what I can move forward with."

The appeal of classes taught in Korean draws Young Sook Cho to Los Angeles City College from her home in Bakersfield once a week. She makes the commute with two other people from Kern County every Tuesday to take the in-home support course.

"Our English isn't perfect, so it's hard to understand those classes in English," said Cho, who said she learned about the class from friends at her Korean American church.

During a class in which students learned how to position clients so they don't suffer from bed sores and muscle breakdowns, Cho worried she might not be able to find Korean-speaking clients where she lives.

Her professor, Helen Jang, quickly assured her, "If you knock, it will open."

Jang said many students develop confidence by learning in their primary language. She also carves out time for students to reflect on the struggles they may share as immigrants.

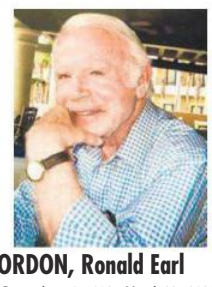
"Whenever I have the chance, I let them express — living in America, how difficult it is," she said. "I also want them to get healing ... through this class."

Irfan Khan Los Angeles Times

PROFESSOR Carlos Brown, left, teaches Ilda Roblero, center, and Gladys Ruiz how to lift a sitting person during a home-care provider class taught in Spanish last month at Los Angeles City College.

OBITUARY NOTICES

Place a paid notice latimes.com/placeobituary
Search obituary notice archives: legacy.com/obituaries/latimes
Los Angeles Times



GORDON, Ronald Earl
December 18, 1932 - March 22, 2023

Ronald Earl Gordon, loving husband, father, grandfather, colleague, and friend to so many, peacefully passed away embraced by his family on March 22, 2023, at his home.

Born in Chicago, Ron grew up in Spokane, Washington, and graduated from the University of Washington. He gratefully served as a captain in the US Air Force before bootstrapping his way to his law degree from the UC Berkeley School of Law and moving to Los Angeles. He joined the Buchalter Nemer Fields Savitch Law firm where he specialized in corporate bankruptcy law for many years, later joining the law firm of Sulmeyer Kupetz Bauman Rothman.

Ron became a leading voice in his field because of the depth of his knowledge, but also, perhaps more importantly, because of his reputation for honesty and integrity.

While Ron enjoyed practicing law, his work was never as important to him as his family, whose well-being took precedence over every other aspect of his life. With his family and friends, Ron was a stable and dependable loving force.

He was the definition of a Good Man. His authentic grace and kindness were admired and appreciated by all who knew him. They also enjoyed his unique fashion style, especially his yellow sweater vest.

Always thirsting for knowledge, Ron had a true intellectual curiosity and after his retirement, he had the time and opportunity to pursue the learning he loved so much. At The Plato Society and with friends, his "fun" was conversational debating, but listening with an open mind and respect.

Ron leaves behind Barbara, his wife of 59 years, his children Liz (Chris) and Rick (Paloma), his grandsons Jack and Luke, and his beloved friend, Rosa.

If you wish to make a donation in his honor, please choose your favorite charity.

ROBINSON, Carole Lee
October 14, 1931 - March 31, 2023

Carole Lee Robinson, a cherished wife, mother, grandmother, and friend, passed away at the age of 91, leaving behind a lifetime of cherished memories. She will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved her.

Carole's pride in her grandchildren and granddog, Charly, was so immense she adorned a custom-made pin bearing their silhouettes. Her pin not only brought Carole joy, but it also became a conversation starter wherever she went.

Carole is survived by her children, John (Circles), Jodie, Gina, Jeff, and Jim. Her daughters-in-law, Joyce and Yolidia. Grandchildren, Jake, Benjamin, Eliza, Payton, Lonie, Holly, Jessee, Arielka, and great-grandson Axel. Granddaughter and grandson-in-law, Christie and James. Her brother, Joe.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the charity named after her husband, the Harold Robinson Foundation. haroldrobinsonfoundation.org Mailing Address:

269 S. Beverly Dr, #338, Beverly Hills, CA 90212 OR

Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, P.O. Box 5014 Hagerstown, MD 21741.

To place an obituary ad please go online to: latimes.com/placeobituary

NAKATA, Jeanette Ayako

(88) passed away on February 24, 2023 in Torrance. She is survived by her brothers, Ken (Jen) and Ronald Nakata; sister-in-law, Inez Nakata;

also survived by many nieces, nephews, and other relatives.

A private memorial service was held on Saturday, April 1, 2023 at Kubota Mortuary, with Pastor Jim Miyabe from Venice Free Methodist Church officiating. The family kindly requests no flowers or koden.

www.kubotamortuary.com
(213) 749-1449

SHAKELY, Carole Ferguson
January 6, 1942 - March 30, 2023

Carole passed away peacefully on March 30, 2023. She is survived by her husband Jim, her son Benton, his wife Katie, and her grandchildren Connor and Mason. She was an unforgettable wife, parent, teacher and friend. Her exuberant spirit, as it always has, roams the wild world and beyond. Donations in her memory can be made to Homeboy Industries.

STUBBERUD , May Tragus
May 15, 1929 - March 30, 2023

May Tragus Stubberud passed away on March 30th after a short illness. Her husband, Allen, and younger son, Stephen, were by her side. Her husband was continually by her side throughout her illness and her hospitalization.

May was born in Los Angeles, the first child of Peter and Angeliki Tragus, Greek immigrants. She was always proud to tell people of her birthplace and her Greek heritage. She grew up in the Greek community of the 'San Julian' church, which later became the Saint Sophia Cathedral community in Los Angeles. In 1961, she met and married the love of her life, Allen Stubberud, with whom she spent over 61 blessed years. She supported him in his career, wherever it took him. While he spent time with his work, including several years in DC, she took care of the household, including bearing and raising two sons, Peter and Stephen. She was passionate about her sons and their education, wearing out a couple of cars driving them to private schools in Orange County. One of her proudest moments was when both her boys earned their PhDs in Engineering. Probably a prouder moment was when they presented her with three grandchildren, Allen (aka AJ), Allison, and Angelique, whom she adored dearly.

May and Allen were founding members of St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church in Irvine. After moving to Irvine in 1971, May and her family attended several of the Greek Orthodox churches from Redondo Beach to Anaheim, but after St. Paul's was founded, that was her church and, in spite of some mobility issues, she attended services regularly. She and her husband loved to travel. Much of her travel, from Seoul, Korea to Istanbul was in conjunction with her husband's work. She especially enjoyed the time when he was Chief Scientist of the US Air Force, and she was treated like a general's wife. During that time she met several astronauts, including Buzz Aldrin, and John Denver, the singer. She had a passion for shopping. She had such pep and energy that people could not believe she was over ninety. She always needed to be the hostess when friends or family visited, even as she grew older, when they asked her to relax.

The Trisagion service will be held at 7:00 PM on Thursday, April 6 at St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church, 4949 Alton Parkway, Irvine, with the funeral the following day, April 7, at 10:00 AM.

May is survived by her husband Allen, her sons Peter (Laura) and Stephen (Adelina), her grandchildren Allen (aka AJ), Allison, and Angelique, and her brother Tom Tragus (Evelyn). She will be sorely missed by her nieces, nephews, cousins, and numerous friends. May her memory be eternal.

Lighthouse Memorials & Receptions
(310) 792-7575

THE WEATHER

Today in Southern California

Cool: Temperatures will stay below historical averages Tuesday as cool air lingers in the wake of a storm moving farther away to the east and northeast. Although it will not be as windy as Monday, there will be a breeze in the afternoon. High pressure will promote sunshine Wednesday and Thursday, with temperatures trending higher. Dry weather will continue Friday through the weekend.

5-day forecasts

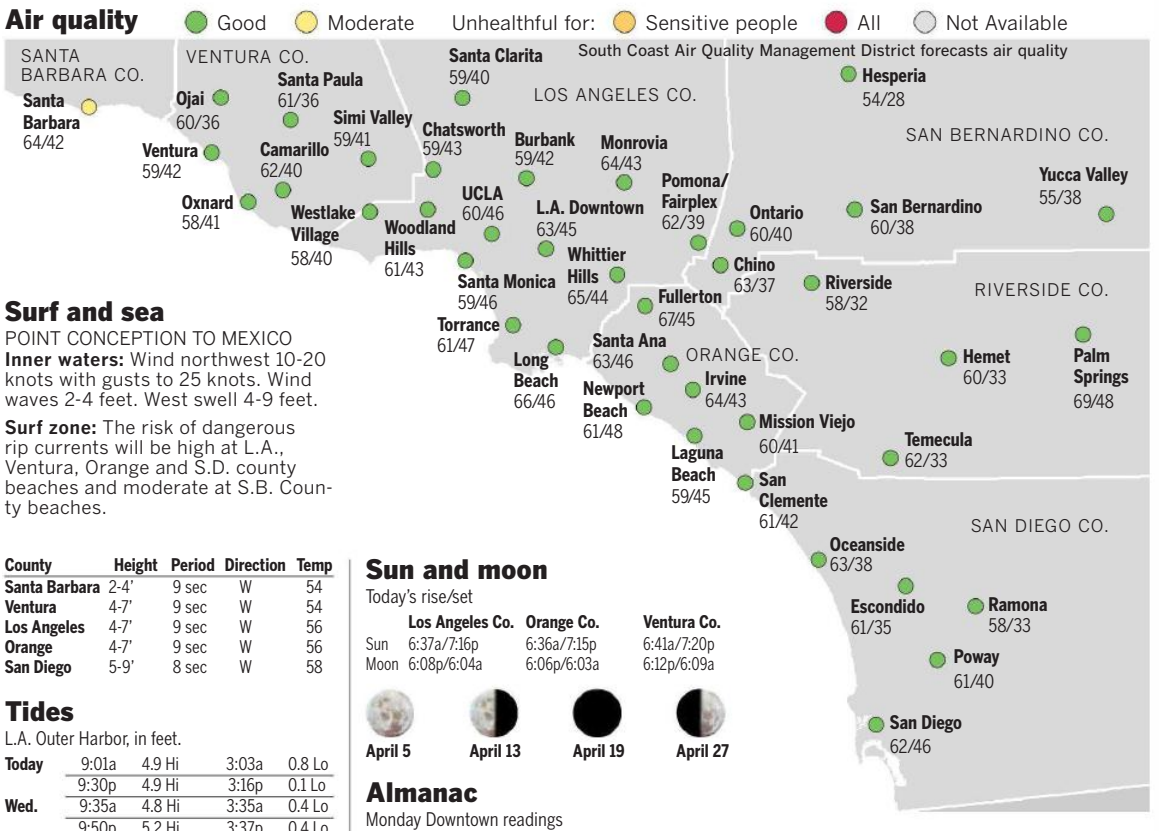
High/low temperatures are average forecasts for entire zone.

	L.A. Basin		Valleys		Beaches		Mountains		Deserts	
Today	63|45		59|43		59|46		36|16		69|48	
	Mostly sunny; cool		Mostly sunny; cool		Mostly sunny; cool		Sunny and cold		Sun, but cool	
Wednesday	Mostly sunny	67/48	Mostly sunny	67/46	Mostly sunny	65/47	Sunny; cold	43/21	Sunny	73/50
Thursday	Mostly sunny	74/51	Sunny	71/49	Sunny	66/49	Mostly sunny	50/28	Mostly sunny	80/57
Friday	Mostly sunny	72/51	Mostly sunny	72/51	Mostly sunny	67/50	Sunny; cool	55/34	Sunny	86/61
Saturday	Clouds, sun	71/54	Partly sunny	73/53	Partly sunny	66/52	Some sun	55/27	Some sun	87/62

Air quality

Good · Moderate · Unhealthful for: Sensitive people · All · Not Available

South Coast Air Quality Management District forecasts air quality



Surf and sea

POINT CONCEPTION TO MEXICO

Inner waters: Wind northwest 10-20 knots with gusts to 25 knots. Wind waves 2-4 feet. West swell 4-9 feet.

Surf zone: The risk of dangerous rip currents will be high at L.A., Ventura, Orange and S.D. county beaches and moderate at S.B. County beaches.

County	Height	Period	Direction	Temp
Santa Barbara	2-4'	9 sec	W	54
Ventura	4-7'	9 sec	W	54
Los Angeles	4-7'	9 sec	W	56
Orange	4-7'	9 sec	W	56
San Diego	5-9'	8 sec	W	58

Tides

L.A. Outer Harbor, in feet.

Today	9:01a	4.9 Hi	3:03a	0.8 Lo
	9:30p	4.9 Hi	3:16p	0.1 Lo
Wed.	9:35a	4.8 Hi	3:35a	0.4 Lo
	9:50p	5.2 Hi	3:37p	0.4 Lo

UV index

Minutes to burn for sensitive people

Las Vegas, 25 · Phoenix, 25
Los Angeles, 25 · San Francisco, 30

Sun and moon

Today's rise/set

	Los Angeles Co.	Orange Co.	Ventura Co.
Sun	6:37a/7:16p	6:36a/7:15p	6:41a/7:20p
Moon	6:08p/6:04a	6:06p/6:03a	6:12p/6:09a

April 5 · April 13 · April 19 · April 27

Almanac

Monday Downtown readings

Temperature	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura
High/low	65/54	69/56	61/50
Normal high/low	71/54	73/53	67/47
High/low a year ago	65/54	69/57	60/55
Record high/date	94/1961	88/2015	88/1960
Record low/date	40/1892	46/2003	39/1967

Precipitation	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura
24-hour total (as of 5 p.m.)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Season total (since Oct. 1)	27.42	20.53	25.42
Last season (Oct. 1 to date)	11.83	6.30	11.04
Season norm (Oct. 1 to date)	13.13	10.80	14.82
Humidity (high/low)	80/17	77/20	92/33

California cities

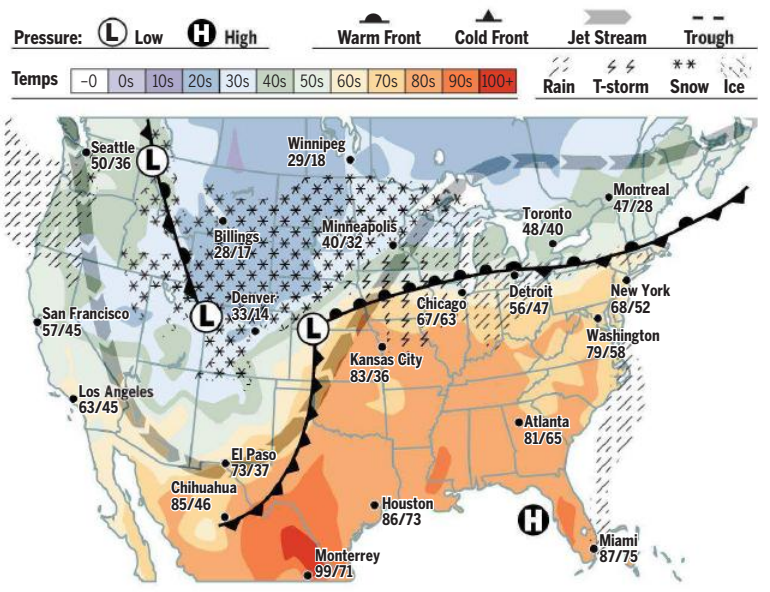
City	Monday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Wed. Hi	Lo
Anaheim	69	53	--	65	41	72	46
Avalon/Catalina	54	46	--	51	45	58	50
Bakersfield	57	46	Tr	59	39	63	42
Barstow	56	48	--	60	37	63	39
Big Bear Lake	37	28	.01	36	16	43	21
Bishop	47	37	--	51	24	54	30
Burbank	60	51	Tr	59	42	68	46
Camarillo	65	51	--	62	40	66	44
Chatsworth	60	51	--	59	43	67	45
Chino	65	49	--	63	37	70	41
Compton	63	54	--	65	45	71	46
Dana Point	59	53	--	60	43	65	46
Death Valley	72	62	--	69	56	69	59
Del Mar	61	52	--	57	44	59	47
Escondido	61	51	--	61	35	67	39
Eureka	47	35	.09	51	37	51	47
Fallbrook	61	51	.01	62	36	70	40
Fresno	58	43	--	60	38	65	44
Fullerton	69	56	--	67	45	74	47
Hemet	57	46	--	60	33	68	35
Hesperia	48	43	--	54	28	62	32
Huntington Beach	66	54	--	62	46	66	47
Idyllwild	37	34	--	44	30	53	37
Irvine	64	52	--	64	43	71	48

City	Monday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Wed. Hi	Lo
L.A. D'ntown/USC	65	54	--	63	45	67	48
L.A. Int'l. Airport	62	53	.01	60	45	66	48
Laguna Beach	63	52	--	59	45	65	49
Lancaster	52	42	--	53	32	63	29
Long Beach	67	57	--	66	46	72	48
Mammoth Lakes	50	19	--	32	8	41	25
Mission Viejo	62	48	--	60	41	68	46
Monrovia	61	49	--	64	43	69	46
Monterey	53	47	Tr	55	43	56	45
Mt. Wilson	38	32	--	35	32	40	36
Needles	71	58	--	65	42	69	47
Newport Beach	59	54	--	61	48	66	49
Northridge	59	50	--	61	43	69	47
Oakland	58	44	--	58	42	57	45
Oceanside	62	54	Tr	63	38	68	39
Ojai	61	48	.01	60	36	64	43
Ontario	63	50	Tr	60	40	69	45
Palm Springs	74	56	--	69	50	73	50
Pasadena	62	48	.03	62	44	68	48
Paso Robles	56	41	--	60	33	62	34
Redding	57	36	--	60	36	60	41
Riverside	60	47	--	58	32	67	39
Sacramento	59	38	--	61	38	61	42
San Bernardino	61	52	--	60	38	67	43

City	Monday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Wed. Hi	Lo
San Diego	63	55	Tr	62	46	65	48
San Francisco	55	46	--	57	45	58	47
San Gabriel	xx	xx	--	65	43	71	47
San Jose	57	42	Tr	59	40	61	43
San Luis Obispo	57	46	--	61	41	63	44
Santa Ana	64	55	Tr	63	46	67	51
Santa Barbara	63	48	--	64	42	62	42
Santa Clarita	54	47	--	59	40	68	46
Santa Monica Pier	63	52	--	59	46	65	47
Santa Paula	64	49	--	61	36	67	42
Santa Rosa	59	37	--	62	34	61	38
Simi Valley	xx	xx	--	59	41	66	44
Tahoe Valley	30	9	.12	34	17	42	27
Temecula	59	48	--	62	33	69	41
Thousand Oaks	61	49	.01	59	39	66	44
Torrance	61	54	--	61	47	66	49
UCLA	xx	xx	--	60	46	65	49
Van Nuys	62	52	--	62	45	70	48
Ventura	61	50	--	59	42	61	44
Whittier Hills	67	52	--	65	44	72	46
Woodland Hills	63	50	--	61	43	68	48
Wrightwood	45	30	--	41	28	50	32
Yorba Linda	65	49	--	63	40	68	46
Yosemite Valley	xx	xx	xx	42	20	50	28

Today in North America

More severe storms for the Midwest: A powerful storm system will bring another round of severe thunderstorms to the Midwest and mid-South, with all severe hazards expected. The northern Plains will see snow and blizzard conditions.



U.S. cities

MONDAY'S EXTREMES FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES

High 102 in Cotulla, Texas

Low –14 in Yellowstone N.P., Wyo.

City	Monday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Sky
Albany	63	24	--	56	42	Sh
Albuquerque	75	41	--	46	25	W
Anchorage	35	21	--	39	29	Sf
Aspen	50	33	--	27	9	Sn
Atlanta	59	55	.12	81	65	Pc
Austin	90	69	--	88	62	W
Baltimore	71	33	--	78	57	Pc
Boise	46	30	.01	44	26	W
Boston	52	31	Tr	56	42	Sh
Buffalo	58	33	.05	53	41	Sh
Burlington, Vt.	55	24	.03	49	36	Pc
Charleston, S.C.	75	54	--	85	62	Ts
Charlotte	66	48	.02	81	60	Pc
Chicago	64	45	.02	67	63	Ts
Cincinnati	71	42	.04	79	67	Sh
Cleveland	68	39	.02	63	55	Sh
Columbia, S.C.	69	49	.02	84	60	Pc
Columbus	70	36	--	71	65	Sh
Dallas/Ft.Worth	94	64	Tr	86	58	Pc
Denver	66	30	--	33	14	W
Detroit	64	36	Tr	56	47	Sh
El Paso	85	48	--	73	37	W
Eugene	50	35	.18	49	36	R
Fort Myers	90	70	--	91	70	Pc
Hartford	58	23	--	69	46	Sh
Honolulu	84	69	1.23	82	72	Sh
Houston	87	73	--	86	73	Cy
Indianapolis	76	44	--	77	69	Ts
Jacksonville, Fla.	85	54	Tr	87	64	Pc
Kansas City	71	52	--	83	36	Ts
Knoxville	62	44	Tr	83	66	Pc
Las Vegas	64	55	Tr	56	39	Su
Louisville	76	49	.01	84	72	Sh
Medford	48	34	.04	49	35	Sf
Memphis	74	57	.21	85	71	Pc
Miami	86	73	--	87	75	Sh
Milwaukee	59	46	.07	52	47	Ts
Minneapolis	44	35	--	40	32	Sn
Nashville	64	55	Tr	83	71	Pc
New Orleans	86	72	Tr	87	75	Cy
New York	59	39	--	68	52	Cy
Norfolk	71	43	--	74	57	Sh
Oklahoma City	86	56	--	82	38	Pc
Omaha	61	35	--	78	28	Ts
Orlando	90	69	--	91	69	Pc
Philadelphia	63	35	--	75	55	Pc
Phoenix	83	55	--	64	43	Su
Pittsburgh	68	34	--	73	59	Pc
Portland, Ore.	50	38	.04	49	39	Pc
Providence	52	27	--	63	43	Sh
Raleigh/Durham	75	45	Tr	80	56	Pc
Reno	38	24	.08	42	26	Pc
Richmond	73	40	--	79	56	Pc
St. Louis	79	54	--	87	67	W
Salt Lake City	37	33	1.67	34	28	Sn

City	Monday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Sky
Seattle	48	35	.19	50	36	Pc
Tampa	87	69	--	89	72	Su
Tucson	83	48	--	60	35	Su
Tulsa	89	58	--	84	45	W
Washington, D.C.	72	42	--	79	58	Pc
Wichita	81	55	--	85	33	W

World

City	Monday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Sky
Acapulco	88	68	--	87	70	Pc
Amsterdam	50	36	--	50	30	Pc
Athens	67	54	.10	63	53	Sh
Bangkok	100	81	--	101	81	Su
Barcelona	59	50	--	61	46	Su
Berlin	42	30	--	43	30	Pc
Cabo San Lucas	84	63	--	80	58	Su
Cairo	88	59	--	91	61	Su
Dubai	77	68	--	80	67	Su
Dublin	51	43	--	54	48	Cy
Havana	90	66	--	91	71	Pc
Ho Chi Minh City	93	78	.08	95	79	Ts
Hong Kong	79	71	.05	81	72	Ts
Istanbul	68	53	.12	65	50	Cy
Jerusalem	73	48	--	82	51	Su
Johannesburg	73	54	.46	76	48	Su
Kuala Lumpur	89	76	.15	93	75	Ts
Lima	85	73	--	83	74	Pc
London	54	34	--	57	35	Su
Madrid	68	36	--	70	33	Su
Mecca	98	72	--	98	75	Hz
Mexico City	87	57	--	87	56	Hz
Montreal	46	28	.13	47	28	Su
Moscow	55	42	.21	54	38	Pc
Mumbai	86	78	--	89	77	Hz
New Delhi	86	68	.10	88	66	Hz
Paris	54	41	--	53	33	Su
Prague	41	28	--	38	28	Pc
Rome	68	50	--	59	41	Su
Seoul	77	42	--	72	55	R
Singapore	82	77	.57	89	77	Ts
Taipei City	82	66	--	84	67	Pc
Tokyo	60	51	--	66	53	Pc
Vancouver	46	34	Tr	49	36	Su
Vienna	45	39	--	43	26	W

Key: **Su** sunny; **Pc** partly cloudy; **Cy** cloudy; **Fg** foggy; **Prcp** precipitation; **Dr** drizzle; **Hz** hazy **Sh** showers; **Ts** thunderstorms; **R** rain; **Sn** snow; **Sf** snow flurries; **I** ice; **Rs** rain/snow; **W** windy; **Tr** trace. **Notes:** National extremes exclude Alaska and Hawaii. Missing data indicated by "xx". Monday's readings as of 5 p.m.

Forecasts by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2023
AccuWeather | Discover our app

NBA STANDINGS

Standings have been arranged to reflect how the teams will be determined for the playoffs. Teams are ranked 1-15 by record. The top six teams in each conference qualify for the playoffs. Teams seven through 10 will participate in a play-in tournament with the top-seeded play-in team meeting the lowest qualifying play-in team. The next-lowest qualifying team would play the second, etc. Head-to-head competition is the first of several tiebreakers, followed by conference record. (Western Conference divisions:S-Southwest; P-Pacific; N-Northwest; Eastern Conference divisions: A-Atlantic; C-Central; S-Southeast).

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Team	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	Rk.
1. y-Denver	52	26	.667		6-4	N1
2. y-Memphis	49	29	.628	3	8-2	S1
3. x-Sacramento	47	31	.603	5	6-4	P1
4. Phoenix	43	35	.551	9	6-4	P2
5. CLIPPERS	41	38	.519	11½	5-5	P3
5. Golden State	41	38	.519	11½	5-5	P4
7. LAKERS	40	38	.513	12	7-3	P5
7. New Orleans	40	38	.513	12	7-3	S2
9. Minnesota	39	40	.494	13½	4-6	N2
10. Oklahoma City	38	41	.481	14½	4-6	N3
11. Dallas	37	42	.468	15½	3-7	S3
12. Utah	36	42	.462	16	3-7	N4
13. Portland	33	45	.423	19	2-8	N5
14. San Antonio	20	58	.256	32	2-8	S4
15. Houston	19	60	.241	33½	2-8	S5

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Team	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	Rk.
1. y-Milwaukee	56	22	.718		7-3	C1
2. x-Boston	54	24	.692	2	7-3	A1
3. x-Philadelphia	51	27	.654	5	5-5	A2
4. x-Cleveland	49	30	.620	7½	7-3	C2
5. x-New York	46	33	.582	10½	7-3	A3
6. Brooklyn	43	35	.551	13	4-6	A4
7. Miami	41	37	.526	15	5-5	S1
8. Atlanta	39	39	.500	17	5-5	S2
8. Toronto	39	39	.500	17	7-3	A5
10. Chicago	38	40	.487	18	7-3	C3
11. Orlando	34	44	.436	22	6-4	S4
11. Washington	34	44	.436	22	3-7	S3
13. Indiana	34	45	.430	22½	3-7	C4
14. Charlotte	26	53	.329	30½	4-6	S5
15. Detroit	16	62	.205	40	1-9	C5

x-clinched playoff berth; y-division

TODAY'S GAMES

Favorite	Line	Underdog	Time
LAKERS	8	at Utah	6 p.m.
Milwaukee	12½	at Washington	4 p.m.
Cleveland	4½	at Orlando	4 p.m.
Miami	11½	at Detroit	4 p.m.
Toronto	14½	at Charlotte	4 p.m.
at Brooklyn	1	Minnesota	4:30 p.m.
at Chicago	3½	Atlanta	5 p.m.
at Memphis	18	Portland	5 p.m.
at Philadelphia	2½	Boston	5 p.m.
at New Orleans	2	Sacramento	5 p.m.
Denver	10	at Houston	5 p.m.
at Phoenix	18½	San Antonio	7 p.m.
at Golden State	8	Oklahoma City	7 p.m.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Embiid, Philadelphia	64	699	647	2110	33.0
Doncic, Dallas	64	706	502	2096	32.8
Lillard, Portland	58	556	510	1866	32.2
Gilgeous-Alexander, OKC	66	686	654	2081	31.5
Antetokounmpo, Milwaukee	62	698	488	1931	31.1
Tatum, Boston	72	713	521	2185	30.3
Mitchell, Cleveland	67	664	311	1879	28.0
Irving, Dallas	59	582	246	1592	27.0
Brown, Boston	66	667	263	1759	26.7
Morant, Memphis	59	552	367	1561	26.5
Young, Atlanta	71	586	538	1862	26.2
Markkanen, Utah	66	571	349	1691	25.6

Westbrook has fit better with Clippers

[**Westbrook,** from B10]
game for us collectively, it's probably going to be an important game for them as well, so it's just going to be a big game overall making sure we're ready to go," Westbrook said. "My job is to make sure us in the locker room are locked in and ready to compete."

The Lakers pivoted from other trades to acquire Westbrook before the 2021-22 season, believing in the former MVP's theoretical fit playing with LeBron James and Anthony Davis.

"As the season prolongs, we will figure it out," Westbrook said at his introductory news conference. "There will be ups and there will be downs."

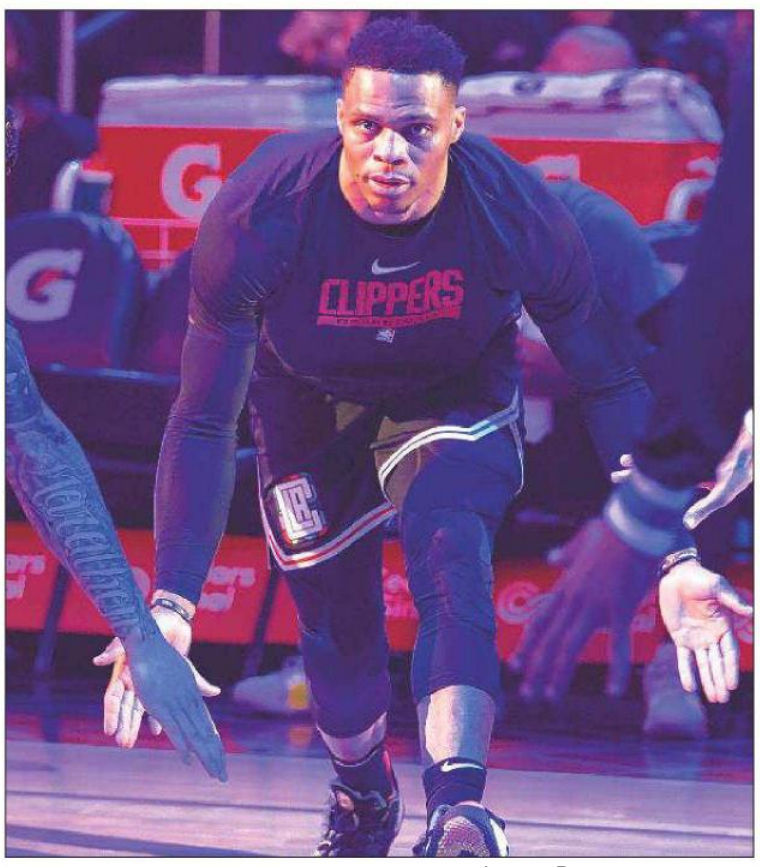
His 130-game tenure produced more of the latter than the former. That fit quickly became unwieldy, a player who needed the ball to thrive trying to play alongside James and Davis, two other high-volume scorers. A move to the bench helped, but only after uncomfortable stretches when he often stood in the corner.

His massive salary limited the Lakers' options for roster upgrades. He clashed with reporters. Every missed shot and defensive gamble became a reminder of the path taken instead of choosing other 2021 trade packages, or holding on to role players from their 2020 title roster who were included in the deal to acquire him.

In February, when James surpassed Kareem Abdul-Jabbar as the NBA's all-time leading scorer — only days after James publicly supported efforts to trade for Kyrie Irving, a deal that would have worked financially only if Westbrook was included — it was Westbrook who earned the assist. Westbrook takes pride in his place in NBA history, yet left the arena without commenting on his role in that moment.

Traded in February to Utah, which bought out his contract, Westbrook joined the Clippers and expressed how important it meant to him to be wanted. The team's stars, Paul George — who had staunchly defended Westbrook, his former Oklahoma City teammate, earlier this season as he struggled with the Lakers — and Kawhi Leonard joined coach Tyronn Lue and members of the front office in pushing for his addition.

"Russ, he figures it out wherever he goes, no matter what's going on around him, he's been able to do it for a number of years," New Orleans coach Willie Green said. "This team especially, it seems like he's fitting in well and the guys are embracing him."



ALLISON DINNER Associated Press

RUSSELL WESTBROOK is shooting better from the field and scoring more off fast breaks and turnovers since joining Clippers.

The Clippers approached their partnership with equal parts caution and optimism. Six weeks later, many within the organization have expressed, privately or publicly, that it has gone better than expected, calling the point guard a popular addition in the locker room, if an imperfect solution to preexisting on-court woes.

"Honestly it's way better than I thought it would be and he's fitting in pretty good so far," center Ivica Zubac said March 6. "He's a great leader also. He's very vocal, something we needed."

One NBA team scout, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not allowed to comment publicly, believed asking Westbrook to be the Lakers' third-best player wasn't fair because of the clashing styles of play with James and Davis.

"Asking Russ to be a 3-and-D guy is like asking Wilt [Chamberlain] to be a point guard," the scout said, adding that with the Clippers it is "same city, lower expectations, less pressure. He is value-added."

Westbrook made 46% of his two-point shots and 29% of his three-pointers this season as a Laker, and 54% and 32% as a Clipper. He is rebounding less as a Clipper, while his averages for assists, steals, blocks, turnovers and fouls are virtually unchanged.

Yet how he scores has shifted significantly. Fast breaks have accounted for nearly a fifth of Westbrook's points as a Clipper, nearly double his rate as a Laker. He is also scoring off of turnovers at double his rate as a Laker, an indication one of the Clippers' goals for Westbrook has been met by giving a slow, aging roster that doesn't often force turnovers another way to generate points.

So has another. Westbrook is one of the most prideful stars in the league, but upon his arrival, Clippers coaches appealed to his humility. They asked him to avoid pull-up jumpers early in the shot clock, and he has remained noticeably disciplined, even when opponents have purposefully sagged off. Where the Lakers asked Westbrook to set screens with little success — he acted as the roller in pick-and-roll situations 11 times during his season and a half with the Lakers, according to Synergy Sports — he has done it already eight times in 18 games with the Clippers.

"He's bought into that," Lue said.

Even the tone of his postgame interviews has changed. Westbrook has taken responsibility for losses; in March, he told a group of reporters, "I like you guys."

"It's been great, man," Westbrook said. "Just been able to kind of figure out guys, kind of allowing me to be myself and help them out and find ways to do that. Obviously our lineup has changed many different times and guys, obviously [George] being out changed a little bit, but for the most part, man, it's been great thus far in, and thankful and grateful for that."

One potential problem that didn't occur came when wing Terance Mann, who joined the starting lineup as the nominal point guard in early January, was moved to the second unit. Mann might have responded brusquely to Westbrook's arrival as an instant starter in February. Instead, he said Westbrook had helped him "big time" with focusing on a "relentless mentality of the next play is your best play. And I appreciate that from him."

Westbrook was signed to make George's and Leonard's lives, as well as fourth quarters, easier. In 28 fourth-quarter minutes together, that trio produced a huge net rating of 26.0 — scoring 111.5 points per 100 possessions while giving up 85.5.

Westbrook has saved the Clippers with his shot-making in some games and been a detriment in others. The Clippers score 7.5 points fewer per 100 possessions of half-court offense with Westbrook on the court than when he sits, and it is why he hasn't had a guaranteed spot in the closing lineup.

Lue has at times kept Mann or Eric Gordon in during crunch time rather than Westbrook. How Westbrook would handle watching from the sideline was seen, at the time of his signing, as a key stress test of the relationship between the team and its new point guard.

"You see him in the fourth quarter, he's up, he's cheering, he's constantly talking to T-Mann, things he sees, he's talking to me," Lue said March 11, after Westbrook didn't play the final 15 minutes of a win against New York. "And so we need that."

To avoid the play-in, they will need everything Westbrook can offer. Nowhere is that more important than Wednesday, against the Lakers.

FIFA head's plan ignores human rights issues

Infantino has drawn revenue, but he courts authoritarian regimes in quest for expansion.

KEVIN BAXTER
ON SOCCER

Gianni Infantino was reelected to another four-year term as FIFA president last month, running unopposed and winning by acclaim. That means no formal vote was taken, saving Infantino the embarrassment of failing to win unanimously in a race no one else was contesting.

Lise Klaveness, president of the Norwegian soccer federation, publicly said she would not back Infantino. But while Klaveness, discouraged by Infantino's craven ignorance of the human rights issues surrounding last year's World Cup in Qatar, was prepared to vote with her conscience, most of the other delegates at the FIFA Congress voted with their pocketbooks.

FIFA's 211 member federations have seen their annual funding from world soccer's governing body rise from $250,000 to $2 million since Infantino first took office in 2016. The Qatar World Cup left FIFA with $4 billion in reserves, and Infantino is forecasting revenue of at least $11 billion through the next World Cup in North America in 2026.

For an organization that has long seemed to put profit over propriety, that was all worth voting for. But how much has that money cost?

Infantino has long courted controversy, partnering with authoritarian regimes in Russia and Qatar to host the last two World Cups. And while his supporters are correct to say both countries were awarded the tournaments before Infantino took charge, FIFA's president made no secret of his admiration for Russia's outlaw President Vladimir Putin, accepting the country's prestigious Order of Friendship from him in a Kremlin ceremony in 2019. He then prostrated himself before the Qataris on the eve of the last World Cup, reneging on agreements to permit beer sales at tournament venues and banning displays of solidarity with migrant workers, the LGBTQ community and Iranian protesters inside stadiums to keep the country's ruling family happy.

It was a disappointing transformation for someone who was considered a reformer when he was chosen in 2016 to fill out the remainder of Sepp Blatter's scandal-plagued final term as president before winning a four-year term of his own in 2019. Infantino was even a member of FIFA's Reform Committee before, as president, largely abandoning calls for reform while overseeing a massive surge in revenue.

MANU FERNANDEZ Associated Press

GIANNI INFANTINO, left, at last December's World Cup, where he reneged on several agreements.

For Infantino, bigger is always better. More is preferable to less. His strategy has been to try to increase the size and even the frequency of FIFA competitions. His vision, supporters say, is to make soccer truly global and available for all. That requires investment as well as financial management, governance and transparency.

But it also requires more and bigger competitions. So the World Cup will jump from 32 to 48 teams in 2026, while the number of games played will go from 64 to 104. A plan to play the tournament every two years instead of every four was discussed two years ago but quietly forgotten.

The club World Cup, an annual tournament involving seven teams, will grow to 32 entrants and be played every four years beginning in 2025. Steven A. Bank, the Paul Hastings professor of business law at UCLA and a close observer of soccer finances, says the plan has merits but warns that it may prove to be too much.

"From the perspective of currying favor among smaller nations — which has been the campaign tactic for FIFA president candidates for decades — the expanded World Cup is a clear winner because it increased access for more of those countries to qualify," he said. "It may ultimately damage the golden goose, but right now countries just want greater chances to get there.

"A club World Cup probably doesn't have the same individual benefit, but a lot of confederations look at UEFA's Champions League and want to get involved in something like that."

Not everyone is happy with the changes. National leagues say Infantino is crowding the calendar with too many FIFA competitions while the international players union FIFPRO said the expanded men's and women's World Cups, in addition to other competitions, "have created new conditions that further increase pressure on players' workload and their jobs."

"When I hear there is too much football, yes, maybe in some places, but not everywhere," Infantino said. "In fact, in most parts of the world there is not enough football played. We need way more and not less competitions; we want football to develop worldwide."

Those comments clearly weren't directed at a European audience — and with reason. UEFA, the FIFA confederation representing Europe, has 55 members; the rest of the world has 156, many of those in the developing world. And with FIFA operating under a one-nation, one-vote system, those are the federations the president is wooing, which is why last month's FIFA Congress was held in Rwanda and not Rotterdam, the Netherlands. (That decision also put Infantino in bed with another outlaw government since Rwanda's leaders are guilty of repression and significant human rights abuses.)

"These reforms may be unpopular for big leagues and their fans, but they're probably viewed as positive in a lot of places outside Europe," said Bank, who is no fan of the FIFA president. "Infantino may be selling FIFA out for short-term political gain, but he can spin them as increasing access and thereby growing the games internationally for the benefit of everyone."

That's not to say Infantino hasn't done important things. The jump in revenue is mind-boggling and points to the health and popularity of the game, as does the fourfold increase in FIFA's reserves. And that financial security has helped fund a seven-fold increase in investment in development since 2016.

What FIFA lacks, however, is something beyond the self-aggrandizing Infantino's strategy of relentless expansion. More, more, more is not a sustainable approach; in fact, it feels like overkill. And to keep revenue growing at anything close to the current pace, Infantino will have to continue cozying up to authoritarian states whose leaders share more than a kinship with him.

They also win elections in which nobody bothers to count the votes.

Aztecs' magical run ends

[**Aztecs,** from B10]
nament, when they got up eight, to feel so good and confident that they would just step on people," Aztecs assistant coach Dave Velasquez said of Connecticut. "There was a time there where it almost felt like that was happening to us. But the fight, the resilience, to see our team cut it to five with five minutes to go, I honestly could not be more proud of a team after a loss."

Coach Brian Dutcher noted that the Huskies hadn't had a close game all tournament, wondering aloud what might happen if they did.

What happened: Jordan Hawkins curled off a screen, took a pass, pulled up several feet behind the arc and drained a contested three.

Eight-point game.

That ignited a 9-0 run that extinguished any fleeing dreams of an upset.

Johnson led San Diego State with 14 points. Lamont Butler and Darrion Trammell each had 13.

"That's a really good team that beat us tonight," Dutcher said. "Like I said, if we find a team that beats us, we'll tip our hat to them. They beat us, and they were the better team. They're deserving national champions, but I love my team and I love my locker room.

"There's a brotherhood in that locker room that will never be divided by a margin of victory or not winning at all. That brotherhood will last a lifetime."

Sitting next to him, sobbing, was Matt Bradley. He transferred to San Diego State from California two years ago and admitted that he nearly quit the sport.

"I was really ready to just stop playing," Bradley said. "I told myself, 'you know what, man? It's been tough. Just go home and get a job and call it a day, you'll be all right.' But Coach Dutch, he's one of the most genuine guys I've ever met, the way he took me in and the brotherhood and real leadership that we could follow, changed the trajectory of my life for sure.

"It's more than just basketball."

Zeigler writes for the San Diego Union-Tribune.

CONNECTICUT 76, SAN DIEGO ST. 59

San Diego State—K.Johnson 3-5 7-9 14, Mensah 0-4 1-2 1, Bradley 2-9 4-5 8, Butler 5-11 0-0 13, Trammell 5-11 2-2 13, LeDee 3-6 1-2 7, Parrish 0-5 0-0 0, Arop 0-3 0-0 0, Seiko 1-4 0-0 3, Alger 0-1 0-0 0, Barnett 0-0 0-0 0, D.Johnson 0-0 0-0 0, Saunders 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 19-59 15-20 59.

Connecticut — Karaban 1-5 2-3 5, Sanogo 5-9 7-8 17, Hawkins 5-9 4-4 16, Jackson 1-3 1-2 3, Newton 5-11 8-8 19, Alleyne 2-7 2-2 6, Calcaterra 2-6 0-0 6, Clingan 2-3 0-0 4, Diarra 0-0 0-0 0, Hurley 0-0 0-0 0, S.Johnson 0-0 0-0 0, Roumoglou 0-0 0-0 0, Springs 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 23-53 24-27 76.

Halftime—UConn 36-24. 3-Point Goals—San Diego St. 6-23 (Butler 3-7, K.Johnson 1-1, Seiko 1-3, Trammell 1-3, Alger 0-1, Bradley 0-4, Parrish 0-4), UConn 6-17 (Calcaterra 2-3, Hawkins 2-4, Karaban 1-3, Newton 1-3, Jackson 0-1, Alleyne 0-3). Rebounds—San Diego St. 33 (Mensah 6), UConn 40 (Sanogo, Newton 10). Assists—San Diego St. 7 (Butler 2), UConn 13 (Jackson 6). Total Fouls—San Diego St. 20, UConn 15.

SAM FARMER Los Angeles Times

THE FLORIDA BACKYARD of Tommy Craig gets transformed annually with a leaderboard and Masters-like umbrellas. The ex-golf pro says he even has azaleas.

Home homages to Augusta

[**Masters,** from B10]
at Augusta to watch the Masters."

Augustyniak is the Pete Dye of the DIY crowd.

And he's not alone in channeling his inner golf course designer. NASCAR driver Kevin Harvick built a scaled-down rendition of Augusta's 12th hole in the backyard of his North Carolina home. And CBS announcer Jim Nantz, voice of the Masters, is putting the finishing touches on No. 13 at his home in Tennessee.

"There's something about Augusta and the whole Masters experience, it's visual poetry. It's a piece of art," Nantz said.

"People spend a lot of money on art in their homes and on their properties. It just happens to be a very big canvas."

These are not modest endeavors. They can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, and that's not counting the land. A ballpark price for the green complexes is $25-$30 per square foot, but there are bunkers involved too — some are white artificial turf, others are actual sand — and often a fairway tongue that allows for a simulated approach shot.

The transformations aren't about turning crabgrass into ryegrass. Companies such as Back Nine Greens, Celebrity Greens and Putt-Tek use high-quality artificial turf, not just to represent the green grass but often the white sand and blue water hazards. (Hooray for the green, white and blue!)

They aren't perfectly identical replicas of Masters holes because ultra-private Augusta National doesn't provide the precise topographical dimensions to the outside world.

"If you're a golfer and you get a chance to go to Augusta and walk the course, and hang on every shot from your favorite player, it's got to be the ultimate man-cave thing," said Gina Weber, co-owner of Celebrity Greens, based in Scottsdale, Ariz. "Like, 'I need to have this in my backyard.' "

Celebrity Greens recently completed a 12th green for someone in Milton, Ga., and before that built the 13th green for a customer in Cherry Hills, Colo. And, although Weber didn't disclose a name or specific location, a version of the 12th and 13th holes for some high-roller in Los Angeles.

"They're super-cool projects to build," she said.

Nantz's first backyard hole was a replica of No. 7 at Pebble Beach, the iconic par three overlooking the ocean. He and his wife, Courtney, were married on that actual hole and wanted a smaller version for their Pebble Beach home.

So pleased was the announcer with the job by Back Nine Greens, he had the Palm Desert-based company re-create an Augusta hole at his home in Nashville. He also recommended Back Nine to Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen, who had a hole built on his property in Western New York, although his isn't a homage to a famous hole.

87th Masters

When: Thursday-Sunday

Site: Augusta National Golf Club.

Length: 7,545 yards.

Par: 36-36—72.

Purse: To be announced ($15 million in 2022).

Field: 89 players (seven amateurs); Corey Conners clinched a berth Sunday in the Valero Texas Open.

Cut: Top 50 and ties.

Defending champion: Scottie Scheffler.

Television: Thursday-Friday, noon to 4:30 p.m. (ESPN); Saturday, noon to 4 p.m. (CBS); Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. (CBS).

All times PDT

These hole builders are just like millions of other golf fans; they're mesmerized by the Masters.

"When you listen to that music — I've got goose bumps right now — and Jim Nantz comes on the air, it brings tears to your eyes," said Dominic Nappi, founder and president of Back Nine Greens. "Imagine saying, 'Come over to my house and watch the Masters, and I have the 12th hole in my backyard.' How great is that?"

Tommy Craig, a former golf pro who lives in Ormond Beach, Fla., transforms his whole house for the Masters each year. He has two miniature holes, a leaderboard and a shed that looks like a tiny Butler Cabin.

There are also three outdoor tables with green-and-white paneled umbrellas, just like Augusta. In the front yard are flowers planted in the shape of the famous Augusta National — an outline of the United States with a golf flag planted in Georgia.

"We live at the end of a cul-de-sac and we've got woods behind us, so it already has that Augusta feel," Craig said. "We even have azaleas out here, but I'm in Florida and they always seem to bloom a month early."

While Craig has pieced together his backyard masterpiece, his wife, Stacy, has handled all of the Augusta touches inside — including re-creating the tournament's menu for the guests who show up to watch on TV. She makes an array of sandwiches: chicken salad, egg salad, pimento cheese.

"I couldn't do it without her," Craig said.

Amen to that.

THE DAY IN SPORTS

Former Indiana coach Knight out of hospital

WIRE REPORTS

Former Indiana basketball coach **Bob Knight** was released from a hospital in Bloomington, Ind., and returned home after being admitted with an illness over the weekend, his son **Pat Knight** said in an online post Monday.

An email from the university about Knight's health was sent to former Hoosiers players Friday, asking for prayers and saying Knight hoped to return home soon after being hospitalized with an undisclosed illness.

The university did not have an update on Knight's condition Monday.

Knight, 82, won three national titles and 662 games at Indiana before he was fired in 2000. Knight coached Texas Tech from 2001 to 2008 and retired with 902 career wins.

First Lady **Jill Biden** said she wants the runner-up Iowa women's basketball team to be invited to the White House in addition to national title winner Louisiana State. She attended LSU's 102-85 win over Iowa on Sunday in Dallas. Biden praised the Hawkeyes' sportsmanship and congratulated both teams.

LSU star **Angel Reese** tweeted a link to a story on Biden's remarks. " A JOKE," she wrote, along with three rolling-on-the-floor-laughing emojis.

Reese has received attention after she waved her hand in front of her face while staring down Iowa star **Caitlin Clark** late in the Tigers' win, then pointed toward her finger as if to say a ring were coming.

Clark made a similar face-waving gesture to no one in particular during Iowa's Elite Eight victory over Louisville.

LSU's title game win was the most-viewed NCAA women's basketball game on record, with 9.9 million viewers on ABC and ESPN2. ... Stephen F. Austin women's basketball coach **Mark Kellogg** was named to the same job at West Virginia.

ETC.

Kidney problems sidelined Lee

Olympic gymnastics all-around champion **Sunisa Lee** said a kidney issue cut short her college career at Auburn, but she still has her sights set on the Paris Games next year.

Lee, who already had announced plans to leave college and resume training at the elite level this spring, missed the end of the regular season, the Southeastern Conference championships and the NCAA regional because of what Auburn described as a "non-gymnastics health issue."

She revealed in a post on social media that it was related to kidney problems.

Elina Svitolina played a WTA match for the first time since becoming a mother in October, losing to **Yulia Putintseva** 6-7 (3), 6-2, 6-4 at the Charleston (S.C.) Open. In another match, **Sloane Stephens** won 3-6, 6-1, 6-2 over qualifier **Louisa Chirico**. ... **Garbiñe Muguruza** is going to skip the French Open and Wimbledon during an extended break from tennis.

Russian athletes are set to compete again in taekwondo at next month's world championships, the sport's governing body said. The decision could result in Ukraine fulfilling a threat to boycott sporting events in which athletes from Russia or Belarus are involved. ... Brazil's Olympic Committee suspended volleyball gold medalist **Wallace de Souza** for one year for online abuse of President **Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva**.

Peru was stripped of hosting the men's Under-17 World Cup because FIFA said the nation was not ready to stage the soccer tournament this year. ... Germany women's coach **Martina Voss-Tecklenburg** received a contract extension through the 2025 European Championship.

The Miami Dolphins signed tight end **Durham Smythe** through 2025.

The Mercyhurst men's hockey team dismissed **Carson Briere**, son of Philadelphia Flyers interim general manager **Danny Briere**, after a video showed him and another athlete pushing an unoccupied wheelchair down a staircase.

TENNIS RESULTS

$780,637-CREDIT ONE CHARLESTON
At Charleston, S.C.
Surface: Green clay
WOMEN'S SINGLES (round of 64) — Madison Brengle, U.S., def. Kaia Kanepi, Estonia, 6-3, 6-4. Irina-Camelia Begu (15), Romania, def. Dalma Galfi, Hungary, 6-1, 7-5. Lesia Tsurenko, Ukraine, def. Paula Ormaechea, Argentina, 6-1, 6-1. Linda Fruhvirtova, Czech Republic, def. Jil Teichmann (14), Switzerland, 6-2, 3-6, 6-2. Julia Grabher, Austria, def. Zhang Shuai (10), China, 6-4, 1-6, 6-3. Anna Blinkova, Russia, def. Anna Bondar, Hungary, 7-6 (7), 6-2. Katherine Sebov, Canada, def. Lauren Davis, U.S., 4-6, 6-1, 6-2. Alize Cornet, France, def. Fiona Crawley, U.S., 6-0, 6-2. Sachia Vickery, U.S., def. Kayla Day, U.S., 6-4, 6-2. Anna Kalinskaya, Russia, def. Anhelina Kalinina (11), Ukraine, 7-6 (6), 6-4. Yulia Putintseva, Kazakhstan, def. Elina Svitolina, Ukraine, 6-7 (3), 6-2, 6-4. Sloane Stephens, U.S., def. Louisa Chirico, United States, 3-6, 6-1, 6-2.
WOMEN'S DOUBLES (round of 16) — Ena Shibahara, Japan, and Giuliana Olmos (1), Mexico, def. Alexa Guarachi Mathison, Chile, and Erin Routliffe, New Zealand, 7-5, 6-2. Aldila Sutjiadi, Indonesia, and Yana Sizikova, Russia, def. Bethanie Mattek-Sands and Shelby Rogers, U.S., 6-2, 6-4.
$642,735-US MEN'S CLAY COURT CHAMPIONSHIP
At Houston
Surface: Red clay
MEN'S SINGLES (round of 32) — Daniel Elahi Galan, Colombia, def. Zhang Zhizhen, China, 6-2, 6-3. Denis Kudla, U.S., def. Aleksandar Vukic, Australia, 6-4, 4-6, 6-4. Gijs Brouwer, Netherlands, def. Aleksandar Kovacevic, U.S., 6-4, 6-4.

BASEBALL

NL STANDINGS

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10
DODGERS	3	2	.600	–	3-2
San Diego	3	2	.600	–	3-2
San Francisco	2	2	.500	½	2-2
Arizona	2	3	.400	1	2-3
Colorado	2	3	.400	1	2-3
Central	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**	**GB**	**L10**
Cincinnati	3	1	.750	–	3-1
Milwaukee	3	1	.750	–	3-1
Pittsburgh	2	2	.500	1	2-2
St. Louis	2	2	.500	1	2-2
Chicago	1	3	.250	2	1-3
East	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**	**GB**	**L10**
Atlanta	3	1	.750	–	3-1
New York	3	2	.600	½	3-2
Washington	1	3	.250	2	1-3
Miami	1	4	.200	2½	1-4
Philadelphia	0	4	.000	3	0-4

MONDAY'S RESULTS

at DODGERS 13, Colorado 4
at Milwaukee 10, N.Y. Mets 0
San Francisco 12, at Chicago White Sox 3
Minnesota 11, at Miami 1
at Cincinnati 7, Chicago Cubs 6
Tampa Bay 6, at Washington 2
at N.Y. Yankees 8, Philadelphia 1
Pittsburgh 7, at Boston 6
at Atlanta 8, St. Louis 4
at San Diego 5, Arizona 4

AL STANDINGS

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10
ANGELS	3	1	.750	–	3-1
Texas	3	1	.750	–	3-1
Houston	2	3	.400	1½	2-3
Oakland	1	3	.250	2	1-3
Seattle	1	4	.200	2½	1-4
Central	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**	**GB**	**L10**
Minnesota	4	0	1.000	–	4-0
Cleveland	4	1	.800	½	4-1
Chicago	2	3	.400	2½	2-3
Detroit	1	3	.250	3	1-3
Kansas City	1	3	.250	3	1-3
East	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**	**GB**	**L10**
Tampa Bay	4	0	1.000	–	4-0
New York	3	1	.750	1	3-1
Baltimore	2	2	.500	2	2-2
Boston	2	2	.500	2	2-2
Toronto	1	3	.250	3	1-3

Monday's results

ANGELS 7, at Seattle 3
at New York 8, Philadelphia 1
San Francisco 12, at Chicago 3
Minnesota 11, at Miami 1
Tampa Bay 6, at Washington 2
Pittsburgh 7, at Boston 6
at Kansas City 9, Toronto 5
Baltimore 2, at Texas 0
Detroit 7, at Houston 6, 11 innings
Cleveland 12, at Oakland 11, 10 innings

TODAY'S GAMES

NATIONAL LEAGUE >>>

MATCHUP	W-L	ERA	TIME
COL/Márquez (R)	1-0	3.00	7 p.m.
Dodgers/Urías (L)	1-0	3.00	SNLA
ARI/Gallen (R)	0-1	9.64	1 p.m.
SD/Darvish (R)	—	—	MLB
CHI/Wesneski (R)	—	—	3:30 p.m.
CIN/Cessa (R)	—	—	
NY/Scherzer (R)	1-0	4.50	4:30 p.m.
MIL/Miley (L)	—	—	
ATL/Dodd (L)	—	—	4:45 p.m.
STL/Matz (L)	—	—	

AMERICAN LEAGUE >>>

MATCHUP	W-L	ERA	TIME
Angels/Suarez (L)	—	—	6:30 p.m.
SEA/Castillo (R)	—	—	BSW
TOR/Kikuchi (L)	—	—	4:30 p.m.
KC/Bubic (L)	—	—	
BAL/Wells (R)	—	—	5 p.m.
TEX/Heaney (L)	—	—	
DET/Manning (R)	—	—	5 p.m.
HOU/Valdez (L)	—	—	
CLE/Bieber (R)	—	—	6:30 p.m.
OAK/Sears (L)	—	—	MLB

INTERLEAGUE >>>

MATCHUP	W-L	ERA	TIME
MIN/Maeda (R)	—	—	3:30 p.m.
MIA/Alcantara (R)	0-0	4.76	
PHI/Strahm (L)	—	—	4 p.m.
NY/Germán (R)	—	—	TBS
TB/Fleming (L)	—	—	4 p.m.
WAS/Kuhl (R)	—	—	
PIT/Contreras (R)	—	—	4 p.m.
BOS/Pivetta (R)	—	—	—

ODDS

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Favorite		Underdog	
at DODGERS	-275	Colorado	+225
Chicago	-126	at Cincinnati	+108
New York	-164	at Milwaukee	+138
at St. Louis	-126	Atlanta	+108
at San Diego	-142	Arizona	+120

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Favorite		Underdog	
at Seattle	-164	ANGELS	+138
Toronto	-148	at Kansas City	+126
at Texas	-142	Baltimore	+120
at Houston	-275	Detroit	+225
Cleveland	-205	at Oakland	+172

INTERLEAGUE

Favorite		Underdog	
at Miami	-162	Minnesota	+136
at New York (AL)	-158	Philadelphia	+134
Tampa Bay	-164	at Washington	+138
at Boston	-148	Pittsburgh	+126

LEADERS

Through Sunday's games

NATIONAL LEAGUE >>>

Player	G	AB	R	H	Avg.
Swanson, Chicago	3	12	7	2	.583
Realmuto, Philadelphia	3	11	4	2	.364
Arraez, Miami	4	16	9	2	.563
Goldschmidt, St. Louis	3	12	6	2	.500
Cron, Colorado	4	15	7	3	.467
D'Arnaud, Atlanta	3	13	6	2	.462
W. Smith, DODGERS	3	11	5	2	.455
India, Cincinnati	3	11	5	4	.455
Fraley, Cincinnati	3	9	4	2	.444
Castellanos, Philadelphia	3	11	4	3	.364

AMERICAN LEAGUE >>>

Player	G	AB	R	H	Avg.
Franco, Tampa Bay	3	11	7	3	.636
A. García, Texas	3	11	5	3	.455
Vázquez, Minnesota	2	7	4	0	.571
Duvall, Boston	3	14	8	6	.571
M. Chapman, Toronto	3	12	6	2	.500
Ward, ANGELS	3	14	7	3	.500
Grossman, Texas	3	9	4	2	.444
Devers, Boston	3	15	7	4	.467
Hays, Baltimore	3	13	6	3	.462

Runs batted in

Duvall, Boston 8

DODGERS 13, ROCKIES 4

Streak	Won 1	**This month**	2-1
Home	3-2	**Road**	0-0
Division	3-2	**Interleague**	0-0

Next: Tonight vs. Colorado, Dodger Stadium, 7
TV/Radio: SportsNet LA/570, 1020

Colorado	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Profar lf	4	0	0	0	.000
Bryant rf	4	0	1	0	.350
Blckmon dh	4	0	0	0	.350
Cron 1b	4	0	0	0	.368
McMhon 2b	2	1	0	0	.158
Mustakas 3b	3	1	1	0	.167
Díaz c	4	1	1	1	.188
Castro cf	4	1	1	2	.154
Trejo ss	3	0	2	0	.667
Totals	**32**	**4**	**6**	**3**	

Dodgers	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Betts rf	4	0	1	0	.235
Thmpn cf	1	0	0	0	.333
Frman 1b	4	2	3	0	.421
Smith c	4	2	1	2	.400
Muncy 3b	3	1	0	0	.063
Mrtnez dh	5	2	2	2	.250
Outman lf	5	2	2	3	.333
Vargas 2b	3	1	1	1	.375
Hywd cf-rf	3	2	2	3	.333
Taylor ss	4	1	1	2	.091
Totals	**36**	**13**	**13**	**13**	

Colorado	000	040	000	–	4	6	1
Dodgers	002	070	22x	–	13	13	0

Walks—Colorado 3: McMahon 2, Moustakas 1. Dodgers 5: Freeman 1, Smith 1, Muncy 2, Vargas 1.
Strikeouts—Colorado 12: Profar 1, Bryant 2, McMahon 2, Moustakas 2, Díaz 3, Castro 2. Dodgers 11: Betts 1, Thompson 1, Muncy 2, Martinez 2, Outman 2, Vargas 2, Heyward 1.
E—Bryant (1). **LOB**—Colorado 4, Dodgers 6. **2B**—Díaz (2), Trejo (1), Freeman (1), Martinez (2). **3B**—Outman 2 (2). **HR**—Taylor (1), off Feltner; Heyward (1), off Bird; Smith (2), off Seabold. **RBIs**—Díaz (1), Castro 2 (2), Taylor 2 (3), Martinez 2 (4), Outman 3 (5), Vargas (1), Heyward 3 (3), Smith 2 (7). **SF**—Heyward.
Runners left in scoring position—Colorado 3 (Castro, Profar 2); Dodgers 3 (Vargas, Thompson, Heyward). RISP_Colorado 2 for 5; Dodgers 4 for 9. **DP**—Colorado 1; Dodgers 1

Colorado	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Feltner, L, 0-1	4⅓	4	5	5	5	7	92	9.64
Bird	⅓	4	4	4	0	0	19	12.00
Seabold	3	5	4	4	0	4	49	12.00
Dodgers	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Grove	4	2	3	3	2	4	63	6.75
Almonte, W, 1-0	1	2	1	1	0	1	10	4.50
Vesia	1	1	0	0	0	1	14	10.80
Bickford	1	1	0	0	0	3	21	0.00
Miller	2	0	0	0	1	3	38	0.00

Inherited runners-scored—Bird 3-3, Almonte 2-2, Bickford 1-0. HBP_Seabold (Vargas).
U— Mark Carlson, Jordan Baker, Tripp Gibson, Brennan Miller. **T**—2:47. **Tickets sold**—49,792 (56,000).

ANGELS 7, MARINERS 3

Streak	Won 3	**This month**	3-0
Home	0-0	**Road**	3-1
Division	3-1	**Interleague**	0-0

Next: Tonight at Seattle, 6:30
TV/Radio: Bally Sports West/830, 1220

Angels	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Ward lf	5	1	1	2	.421
Trout cf	1	1	1	0	.417
Ohtani dh	5	1	1	2	.294
Renfroe rf	4	1	1	0	.118
Lamb 1b	3	2	2	0	.429
Fletcher ss	1	0	0	0	.167
Drry 2b-1b	5	0	3	1	.231
Urshela 3b	5	0	0	0	.294
Rngf ss-2b	4	1	2	2	.167
O'Hoppe c	4	0	0	0	.286
Totals	**37**	**7**	**11**	**7**	

Seattle	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Rodríguez cf	3	2	0	0	.286
France 1b	5	0	1	1	.333
Hernández rf	3	0	0	0	.059
Suárez 3b	4	0	2	2	.300
Pollock lf	3	0	0	0	.000
Haggerty 2b	4	0	0	0	.000
Murphy c	4	0	0	0	.000
Hummel dh	3	0	0	0	.000
La Stella	1	0	0	0	.125
Crawford ss	3	1	2	0	.214
Totals	**33**	**3**	**5**	**3**	

Angels	010	120	021	–	7	11	1
Seattle	101	010	000	–	3	5	0

Walks—Angels 6: Trout 3, Renfroe 1, Lamb 1, Rengifo 1. Seattle 4: Rodríguez 2, Pollock 1, Crawford 1.
Strikeouts—Angels 11: Ward 1, Ohtani 1, Lamb 1, 1-Fletcher 1, Urshela 4, O'Hoppe 3. Seattle 8: Hernández 2, Suárez 1, Murphy 3, Hummel 1, Crawford 1.
E—Urshela (1). **LOB**—Angels 10, Seattle 8. **2B**—Lamb (1), Drury (1), Suárez (3), France (2), Crawford (1). **HR**—Ohtani (2), off Kirby; Ward (2), off Festa. **RBIs**—Rengifo 2 (2), Ohtani 2 (5), Ward 2 (6), Drury (1), Suárez 2 (3), France (4). **SB**—Rodríguez (2), France (1).
Runners left in scoring position—Angels 5; Seattle 4.
Runners moved up—Ohtani. **GIDP**—Ohtani.
DP—Seattle 1 (Crawford, France).

Angels	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Detmers	4⅔	4	3	2	3	7	89	3.86
Tepera, W, 1-0	⅓	0	0	0	0	0	3	0.00
Moore, H, 1	1	0	0	0	0	1	11	0.00
Herget, H, 2	1	1	0	0	0	0	18	0.00
Quijada, H, 1	1	0	0	0	0	0	18	0.00
Estévez	1	0	0	0	1	0	15	0.00
Seattle	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Kirby, L, 0-1	4⅓	9	4	4	1	5	84	8.31
Murfee	1⅓	0	0	0	0	1	19	0.00
D.Castillo	1	0	0	0	2	0	19	4.50
Festa	2	2	3	3	3	5	52	9.00

Inherited runners-scored—Tepera 2-0, Murfee 1-0. HBP_Kirby (Trout), Herget (Hernández).
U— Charlie Ramos, Brian O'Nora, Pat Hoberg, Nestor Ceja. **T**—2:49. **Tickets sold**—18,877 (47,929).

TIGERS 7, ASTROS 6

Matt Vierling made a sprawling bases-loaded catch and hit a tiebreaking, two-run homer in the 11th inning as the Tigers rebounded from a meltdown in the ninth for their first win this season.

Detroit	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
N.Maton 3b	4	1	0	0	.000
Greene cf	4	2	1	1	.200
Báez ss	5	0	1	1	.133
Carpenter dh	4	0	0	0	.250
Torkelson 1b	4	2	1	1	.133
Meadows lf	5	0	0	0	.267
Vierling rf	5	2	4	2	.333
McKnstry 2b	4	0	1	0	.200
Kreidler 2b	1	0	0	0	.000
Haase c	5	0	1	2	.077
Totals	**41**	**7**	**9**	**7**	

Houston	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Peña ss	5	1	0	1	.200
Bregman 3b	5	2	3	0	.143
Alvarez lf	6	1	1	4	.353
J.Abreu 1b	5	0	2	1	.381
Tucker rf	3	0	0	0	.235
McCrmick cf	5	0	0	0	.200
Hensley dh	4	0	1	0	.250
Dubón 2b	4	1	1	0	.182
Mldonado c	4	0	1	0	.250
Diaz c	1	1	0	0	.000
Totals	**42**	**6**	**9**	**6**	

Detroit	020	020	100	02	_	7	9	2
Houston	000	040	001	01	_	6	9	0

Walks—Detroit 4: N.Maton 1, Greene 1, Carpenter 1, Torkelson 1. Houston 5: Peña 1, J.Abreu 1, Tucker 1, Hensley 1, Dubón 1.
Strikeouts—Detroit 11: N.Maton 2, Greene 1, Torkelson 1, Meadows 1, Vierling 1, McKinstry 2, Kreidler 1, Haase 2. Houston 4: Alvarez 1, Tucker 1, Hensley 1, Diaz 1.
E—Torkelson (1), Haase (2). **LOB**—Detroit 7, Houston 12. **2B**—J.Abreu (1). **HR**—Greene (1), off B.Abreu; Vierling (1), off Neris; Alvarez (2), off Cisnero. **RBIs**—Haase 2 (2), Báez (1), Torkelson (1), Greene (1), Vierling 2 (2), Peña (2), Alvarez 4 (9), J.Abreu (3). **CS**—Vierling (1). **DP**—Detroit 1 (N.Maton, Kreidler, Torkelson).

Detroit	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Boyd	4⅓	2	2	2	3	3	76	4.15
Cisnero	⅔	2	2	2	1	0	23	10.80
Englert	3	2	0	0	0	0	29	2.25
Lange, BS, 0-1	1	2	1	1	1	0	16	4.50
Wingenter, W, 1-0	1	0	0	0	0	1	10	6.75
Hill, S, 1-1	1	1	1	0	0	0	12	9.00
Houston	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Brown	4⅓	6	4	4	3	5	93	7.71
P.Maton	⅓	0	0	0	1	0	8	0.00
Blanco	1	0	0	0	0	2	12	0.00
B.Abreu	1	1	1	1	0	1	16	3.00
Montero	1	1	0	0	0	2	17	3.00
Pressly	1	0	0	0	0	0	12	9.00
Neris, L, 0-1	2	1	2	1	0	1	20	4.15

Inherited runners-scored—Cisnero 1-1, P.Maton 3-1. IBB_off Lange (Tucker). HBP_Cisnero (Bregman).
T—3:21. **Tickets sold**—29,272 (41,000).

GIANTS 12, WHITE SOX 3

David Villar hit two of the Giants' seven home runs, the most they have hit in a game since July 2, 2002, at Colorado and one shy of the team mark set April 30, 1961, when Willie Mays hit four.

S.F	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Wd Jr. 1b	6	0	2	0	.214
Cnforto rf	6	1	2	1	.167
Estrda 2b	4	2	2	1	.375
Davis 3b	1	1	0	0	.167
Pdrsn dh	3	1	1	1	.214
Flores dh	1	1	1	0	.250
Yrzk cf-lf	3	3	2	2	.357
Vllr 3b-2b	4	2	2	5	.286
Crwfrd ss	4	0	0	0	.200
Sabol lf	3	0	0	0	.100
Jhnson cf	1	1	1	1	.500
Pérez c	4	0	1	1	.200
Totals	**40**	**12**	**14**	**12**	

Chicago	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Anderson ss	4	0	0	0	.318
Robert Jr. cf	4	1	1	1	.261
Benintendi lf	3	1	1	0	.238
Jiménez dh	2	1	1	0	.211
Alberto p	1	0	0	0	.000
Moncada 3b	3	0	1	0	.429
Sheets	1	0	0	0	.000
Vaughn 1b	4	0	1	1	.267
Grandal c	3	0	0	1	.333
Colás rf	3	0	0	0	.294
Andrus 2b	3	0	0	0	.105
Totals	**31**	**3**	**5**	**3**	

San Francisco	021	040	005	–	12	14	0
Chicago	000	000	210	–	3	5	0

Walks—San Francisco 8: Estrada 1, Flores 1, Yastrzemski 2, Villar 1, Crawford 1, Sabol 1, Pérez 1. Chicago 2: Benintendi 1, Jiménez 1.
Strikeouts—San Francisco 9: Wade Jr. 2, Conforto 3, Estrada 1, Villar 1, Sabol 1, Pérez 1. Chicago 5: Anderson 1, Robert Jr. 1, Benintendi 1, Colás 1, Andrus 1.
LOB—San Francisco 9, Chicago 3. **2B**—Yastrzemski (3), Moncada (4), Vaughn (3). **HR**—Pederson (2), off Kopech; Conforto (1), off Kopech; Estrada (1), off Kopech; Yastrzemski (1), off Kopech; Villar (1), off Kopech; Villar (2), off Ruiz; Johnson (1), off Ruiz; Robert Jr. (2), off Manaea. **RBIs**—Pederson (2), Pérez (1), Yastrzemski 2 (3), Conforto (1), Estrada (2), Villar 5 (5), Johnson (1), Vaughn (4), Grandal (2), Robert Jr. (2). **SB**—Estrada (2).
DP—San Francisco 1 (Estrada, Crawford, Wade Jr.); Chicago 1 (Anderson, Vaughn).

San Francisco	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
DeSclafani, W, 1-0	6	3	0	0	0	4	73	0.00
Manaea	2	2	3	3	2	1	37	13.50
Ty.Rogers	1	0	0	0	0	0	8	0.00
Chicago	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Kopech, L, 0-1	4⅔	8	7	7	3	5	91	13.50
Diekman	2	0	0	0	2	3	30	3.86
Lambert	1⅓	1	0	0	1	0	24	0.00
Ruiz	⅓	3	5	5	2	0	30	31.50
Alberto	⅔	2	0	0	0	1	15	0.00

U— James Hoye, Angel Hernandez, D.J. Reyburn, John Libka. **T**—2:36. **Tickets sold**—34,784 (40,241).

BREWERS 10, METS 0

Rookie Brice Turang hit a grand slam for his first big league home run to cap a seven-run fifth as Milwaukee got its first shutout win in a home opener since 2014. New York had more pitch clock violations (four) than hits (three).

New York	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Nimmo cf	2	0	0	0	.167
Marte rf	4	0	0	0	.278
Lindor ss	1	0	0	0	.143
Escbr 3b-2b	0	0	0	0	.063
Alonso 1b	4	0	0	0	.167
McNil 2b-ss	4	0	0	0	.190
Canha lf-3b	4	0	0	0	.235
Vgelbach dh	3	0	1	0	.222
Locastro lf	0	0	0	0	.000
Narváez c	3	0	0	0	.300
Glm 3b-ss-p	4	0	2	0	.250
Totals	**29**	**0**	**3**	**0**	

Milwauk.	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Yelich lf	4	1	0	0	.200
Winker dh	3	1	1	1	.364
Admes ss	5	1	1	1	.200
Tellez 1b	4	1	1	0	.133
Cntrras c	5	0	1	1	.231
Mtchell cf	4	2	1	0	.214
Andrn 3b	3	2	2	3	.455
Miller 3b	0	0	0	0	.500
Turang 2b	3	2	2	4	.500
Wiemer rf	3	0	1	0	.300
Totals	**34**	**10**	**10**	**10**	

New York	000	000	000	–	0	3	0
Milwaukee	001	270	00x	–	10	10	0

a-walked for Anderson in the 7th.
Walks—New York 6: Nimmo 2, Lindor 2, Escobar 1, Narváez 1. Milwaukee 8: Yelich 1, Winker 2, Tellez 1, Mitchell 1, Miller 1, Turang 1, Wiemer 1.
Strikeouts—New York 9: Nimmo 1, Marte 1, Lindor 1, Alonso 1, McNeil 1, Canha 2, Vogelbach 1, Narváez 1. Milwaukee 6: Yelich 4, Adames 1, Anderson 1.
LOB—New York 9, Milwaukee 8. **HR**—Anderson (1), off Carrasco; Turang (1), off Hunter. **RBIs**—Winker (5), Anderson 3 (4), Adames (3), Contreras (3), Turang 4 (5). **SB**—Turang (2), Yelich (1).
Runners left in scoring position—New York 5 (McNeil 2, Alonso 2, Guillorme); Milwaukee 1 (Winker). RISP_New York 0 for 5; Milwaukee 4 for 9.
Runners moved up—Alonso, Contreras.

New York	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Carrasco, L, 0-1	4	4	5	5	4	4	96	11.25
Hunter	2	5	5	5	2	1	44	11.25
Santana	1	0	0	0	2	1	28	0.00
Guillorme	1	1	0	0	0	0	12	0.00
Milwaukee	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Peralta, W, 1-0	6	2	0	0	3	7	85	0.00
Wilson, S, 1-1	3	1	0	0	3	2	49	0.00

Inherited runners-scored—Hunter 2-2. HBP_Wilson (Locastro).
U— Alan Porter, Jim Wolf, Mike Muchlinski, Sean Barber. **T**—2:37. **Tickets sold**—42,017 (41,700).

PADRES 5, DIAMONDBACKS 4

David Dahl and Ha-Seong Kim hit solo home runs in the bottom of the ninth for San Diego. Evan Longoria's home run in the top half of the inning had given Diamondbacks a one-run lead.

Arizona	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Marte 2b	4	0	1	0	.158
Lewis dh	4	0	0	0	.154
Gurriel Jr. lf	4	0	1	0	.250
Thomas cf	0	0	0	0	.000
Walker 1b	3	0	0	0	.353
Longoria 3b	4	2	2	1	.273
Carroll cf-lf	4	2	3	1	.333
Ahmed ss	4	0	2	1	.333
Moreno c	4	0	0	0	.154
McCarthy rf	3	0	0	0	.077
Totals	**34**	**4**	**9**	**3**	

San Diego	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Grisham cf	3	1	1	0	.250
Soto lf	2	1	1	2	.125
Machado 3b	4	0	1	1	.263
Bogaerts ss	4	0	1	0	.389
Crnnwrth 1b	3	0	0	0	.059
Cmpusano c	4	0	0	0	.143
Odor rf	3	1	1	0	.167
Azocar rf	0	0	0	0	.286
Dahl	1	1	1	1	.167
Kim 2b	4	1	1	1	.385
Totals	**31**	**5**	**8**	**5**	

Arizona	020	000	101	–	4	9	0
San Diego	210	000	002	–	5	8	0

Walks—Arizona 1: Walker 1. San Diego 5: Grisham 1, Soto 2, Cronenworth 1, Carpenter 1.
Strikeouts—Arizona 8: Lewis 1, Gurriel Jr. 2, Walker 1, Longoria 1, Carroll 1, Moreno 1, McCarthy 1. San Diego 6: Grisham 2, Bogaerts 2, Carpenter 1, Campusano 1.
LOB—Arizona 4, San Diego 7. **2B**—Marte (2), Odor (1), Bogaerts (3). **HR**—Carroll (1), off Honeywell Jr.; Longoria (1), off Wilson; Soto (1), off R.Nelson; Dahl (1), off McGough; Kim (1), off McGough. **RBIs**—Ahmed (1), Carroll (1), Longoria (1), Soto 2 (4), Machado (3), Dahl (1), Kim (1).
DP—Arizona 1 (Ahmed, Marte, Walker); San Diego 2 (Bogaerts, Kim, Cronenworth; Kim, Bogaerts, Cronenworth).

Arizona	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
R.Nelson	5	6	3	3	3	3	97	5.40
Sulser	1⅓	0	0	0	2	2	25	6.23
Castro	⅔	0	0	0	0	1	5	0.00
Chafin	1	0	0	0	0	0	10	0.00
McGough, L, 0-1, BS, 1-2	2	2	2	2	0	0	7	18.00
	0							
San Diego	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Weathers	5	5	2	2	1	2	90	3.60
Honeywell Jr., BS, 0-1	2	1	1	1	0	3	26	4.50
Wilson	1⅓	1	1	1	0	3	18	2.70
Hill, W, 1-0	⅔	2	0	0	0	0	4	0.00

Inherited runners-scored—Castro 2-0.
U— Jansen Visconti, Ron Kulpa, Cory Blaser, Carlos Torres. **T**—2:29. **Tickets sold**—37,602 (40,222).

GUARDIANS 12, ATHLETICS 11

José Ramírez hit a tiebreaking RBI single in the 10th inning and Amed Rosario scored the eventual winning run later that inning on a wild pitch in the Guardians' fourth win in a row.

Clevelan.	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Kwan lf	5	3	2	1	.273
Rsario ss	5	1	2	2	.250
Rmírez 3b	5	2	3	2	.318
Bell dh	5	0	0	1	.059
Naylor 1b	4	1	3	2	.353
Gmnz 2b	6	1	2	1	.300
Zunino c	5	1	1	0	.357
Brnnan rf	5	2	1	0	.250
Straw cf	3	1	2	2	.313
Totals	**43**	**12**	**16**	**11**	

Oakland	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Kemp 2b	6	1

Dodgers heat up in the cold

They use seven-run fifth inning to prevail on windy, chilly night at Chavez Ravine.

DODGERS 13
COLORADO 4

By Mike DiGiovanna

Dodger Stadium felt more like early season Chicago on Monday night, with a wind-chill factor of about 50 degrees and gusts of 25-28 mph whipping the flags behind center field into a frenzy and turning a few fly balls and infield popups into adventures.

So it was no surprise that the game — especially for one crazy inning — resembled one of those wild Wrigley Field affairs, with the Dodgers and Colorado Rockies combining for 11 runs, eight hits and four walks in the fifth inning.

When the haymakers stopped flying, it was the Dodgers who were standing, riding their seven-run, five-hit outburst in the fifth to a 13-4 victory before a Julio Urías bobblehead night crowd of 49,792 at Dodger Stadium.

Rookie outfielder James Outman and veteran outfielder Jason Heyward each drove in three runs — Outman with a pair of triples and Heyward with a homer and sacrifice fly. Chris Taylor (third inning) and Will Smith (eighth) each crushed a two-run homer to pace a 13-hit attack.

The Rockies had turned a 2-0 deficit into a 4-2 lead with four runs in the top of the fifth, and Colorado starter Ryan Feltner got two quick outs in the bottom of the fifth. But Freddie Freeman doubled to right-center field and Smith and Max Muncy each walked to load the bases.

Rockies manager Bud Black summoned right-hander Jake Bird to face J.D. Martinez, whose fly ball toward the right-field pole — a potential grand slam — was pushed foul by the wind. Martinez settled for a two-run single to left that tied the score 4-4.

Outman one-hopped the right-field wall for a two-run triple and a 6-4 lead, and Miguel Vargas grounded an RBI single to left to make it 7-4. Heyward, making his first start for the Dodgers, capped the rally with a two-run homer to right to make it 9-4.

The Dodgers tacked on two more runs in the seventh when Martinez doubled, Outman tripled — making him the first Dodger since Yasiel Puig in 2014 to triple twice in a game — and Heyward hit a sacrifice fly for an 11-4 lead. Smith's two-run homer in the eighth made it 13-4.

Michael Grove, a fill-in for the fill-in, got the start on the mound for the Dodgers, whose original pick to replace the injured Tony Gonsolin in the rotation, Ryan Pepiot, suffered an oblique strain right before opening day.

Grove, who was in Oklahoma City preparing for a triple-A start Friday when he was summoned to Los Angeles, blanked the Rockies on one hit and struck out four in the first four innings, but his night soured after he walked Ryan McMahon to start the fifth.

The right-hander thought he had Mike Moustakas struck out with a full-count fastball that appeared to catch the top of the zone, and the Dodgers thought they had a double play when Smith threw out McMahon attempting to steal second.

But home plate umpire Mark Carlson called the pitch ball four. Elias Díaz doubled to right for a run, and Yency Almonte yielded a two-run single to Harold Castro. A fourth run scored on Jurickson Profar's double-play grounder for a 4-2 Rockies lead.

The Dodgers got a scare in the seventh when Vargas was hit in the right hand — the same one he injured in spring training — by a Connor Seabold 92-mph fastball. But Vargas was able to finish the game.

Mark J. Terrill Associated Press

THE DODGERS' Michael Grove gave up three runs in four-plus innings in making his first start this season.

Grove delivers an up-and-down start

[**Dodgers,** from B10]
dominant, locating his fastball while effectively mixing his breaking pitches to strike out four batters and blank the Rockies over the first four innings.

Though Grove failed to record an out in the fifth — he issued a pair of walks and then gave up a double to Elias Díaz, leading to three earned runs in his four-plus-inning outing — Roberts still came away from the right-hander's performance impressed.

"It was kind of touch and go if he was gonna make the start," Roberts said, noting that Grove had gone home early the previous couple of days while battling cold-like symptoms. "But he gave us everything he had. The stuff was good. ... It was a big lift."

Granted, Grove wasn't originally supposed to be counted on this soon into the season.

With Tony Gonsolin out for most of April because of a sprained left ankle, fellow rookie right-hander Ryan Pepiot had initially won the Dodgers' open rotation spot with a strong spring camp, relegating Grove to triple-A Oklahoma City after he completed his spring work in Arizona last week.

That's where Grove was — throwing a bullpen session in preparation for an opening day triple-A start — when he got the news last Wednesday that Pepiot had suffered an oblique strain, forcing an early change of plans that will result in Grove getting at least three or four weeks in the Dodgers' starting rotation.

"I was joking, you don't normally see the call-up before the season starts," Grove, 26, said. "But I was just trying to stay ready for whenever my number was called."

That's the same approach the club's other top pitching prospects — Pepiot, Gavin Stone and Bobby Miller — all carried into this season as well.

Over the last couple of years, that quartet has emerged as the cream of the Dodgers' young pitching crop. And whenever one of the team's primary five rotation members goes down this season, it will be one of those four young pitchers likely getting the nod as a big league replacement.

"I think we're all really excited for each other," Grove said. "It's awesome whenever one of us gets a chance. So whether it's Stoner or Bobby later this year, probably, or me and Pep, I think we all just want to do what we can to help this team, and hopefully be here."

For all that camaraderie, though, there is also inevitable competition.

And fair or not, it will put the players' development under a microscope this season as they effectively jockey for position in the Dodgers' short- and long-term plans.

"With a young player, you're trying to gain information," Roberts said when asked what the team is looking for out of its young pitchers this season. "You want to feel that he's dependable enough to realize his pitch count, get through innings, manage stress and keep us in a ballgame, pass it to the next."

Grove will get at least a few more chances before Gonsolin comes back, but there's no guarantee it will be his name called the next time an opening arises in the rotation.

Pepiot could start throwing again as soon as next week, with his oblique injury not believed to be serious.

Stone was the opening day starter for Oklahoma City after his own impressive spring, but he struggled in a 2⅔-inning, six-run season debut in triple A.

Miller, meanwhile, is still in Arizona, building up stamina in extended spring training after he was limited by shoulder soreness at the start of camp. (He threw an inning Saturday and will continue building up from there.)

It's possible any, and maybe even all, of them will factor into the Dodgers' plans at some point this season.

It could help determine the direction of the team's season. And on Monday night, the Dodgers got a first chance to begin taking stock, marking the unofficial start of a prospect pitching battle that could last the entire year.

Rendon punished before Angels' win

[**Angels,** from B10]
suspension was reduced. "I'm usually pretty good about interacting with fans ... have fun with it. But the gentleman, we spoke on the phone, and we both apologized about what had happened. And so we're both ready to move forward.

"I can't be mad, right? I'm a fan of other sports. I like heckling too."

In one video of the incident, Rendon could be heard asking the fan: "What did you say? ... Yeah, you called me a b—, huh?"

The fan repeatedly shook his head and said "it wasn't me" while his chest was pinned against the stadium railing as Rendon kept pulling his shirt.

Rendon responded, "Yeah, you did," several times before releasing the shirt, freeing the fan to pull back from the railing as Rendon took an open-handed swipe at the bill of the fan's hat and said, "Get the f— out of here."

Rendon said Monday that after he returned to the clubhouse Thursday and changed out of his jersey, he went back out to the stands to try to apologize, but the fan had left.

Lindsey Wasson Associated Press

SHOHEI OHTANI rounds the bases after his two-run homer in the fifth inning of the Angels' 7-3 win.

"He's remorseful for everything that happened," Angels manager Phil Nevin said Monday of Rendon. "This doesn't at all change how I feel about him as a person. ... He's a great leader on our team, and he has accepted responsibility as a good leader."

This is the second time in two seasons that Rendon has been suspended.

Last season, MLB suspended him five games for his involvement in a brawl with the Mariners while he was on the injured list recovering from wrist surgery.

Angels roll to win

Shohei Ohtani hit his second home run of the season, Taylor Ward added a two-run shot, and the Angels beat the Mariners 7-3.

Ohtani drove a 1-1 pitch from George Kirby (0-1) an estimated 431 feet into the right-center-field seats in the fifth inning for a 4-2 advantage.

Ohtani had grounded out in his first two at-bats before the rare home run off Kirby, who surrendered only one long ball during the final three months of last season.

Ward's homer came off Matt Festa with two outs and after Luis Rengifo had walked on a couple of borderline pitches.

Rengifo, who filled in for Rendon, also was a problem for Seattle with two RBI singles earlier in the game, both scoring Jake Lamb.

Mike Trout was also on base five times with a single, three walks and a hit by pitch.

After losing on opening night, the Angels have won three straight.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

PRO CALENDAR

	TUE 4	WED 5	THU 6	FRI 7	SAT 8
DODGERS	**COLORADO** 7 SNLA		**at Arizona** 7 SNLA	**at Arizona** 6:30 SNLA	**at Arizona** 5 SNLA
ANGELS	**at Seattle** 6:30 BSW	**at Seattle** 1 BSW		**TORONTO** 6:30 BSW	**TORONTO** 6 BSW
LAKERS	**at Utah** 6 SpecSN	**at Clippers** 7 SpecSN, ESPN		**PHOENIX** 7:30 SpecSN	
CLIPPERS		**LAKERS** 7 BSSC, ESPN			**PORTLAND** 1 BSSC
KINGS	**EDMONTON** 7:30 ESPN		**at Vegas** 7 BSW		**COLORADO** 7:30 BSW
DUCKS		**EDMONTON** 7 TNT			**at Arizona** 2:30 BSW
GALAXY					**at Houston** 5:30 Apple TV
LAFC		**at Vancouver *** 7 FS1			**AUSTIN** 4:45 Ch. 11, Apple TV
ANGEL CITY	**APRIL 15 VS. LOUISVILLE, 7 P.M., CBSSN**				

Shade denotes home game. *CONCACAF Champions League

TODAY ON THE AIR

TIME	EVENT	ON THE AIR
BASEBALL		
1 p.m.	Arizona at San Diego	**TV:** MLB
4 p.m.	Philadelphia at New York Yankees	**TV:** TBS
6:30 p.m.	Angels at Seattle	**TV:** BSW **R:** 830, 1220
6:30 p.m.	Cleveland at Oakland	**TV:** MLB
7 p.m.	Colorado at Dodgers	**TV:** SNLA **R:** 570, 1020
BASKETBALL		
5 p.m.	Boston at Philadelphia	**TV:** TNT
6 p.m.	G League Championship, Rio Valley Grande at Delaware, Game 1	**TV:** ESPNU
6 p.m.	Lakers at Utah	**TV:** SpecSN **R:**710, 1330
COLLEGE BASEBALL		
2:30 p.m.	North Carolina State at East Carolina	**TV:** ESPNU
5 p.m.	Utah Tech at Utah	**TV:** Pac-12
COLLEGE SOFTBALL		
5 p.m.	Ball State at Notre Dame	**TV:** ACC
HOCKEY		
5 p.m.	Vegas at Nashville	**TV:** ESPN, ESPND
7:30 p.m.	Edmonton at Kings	**TV:** ESPN **R:** iHeart
SOCCER		
11 a.m.	Dutch Cup, PSV Eindhoven at Spakenburg	**TV:** GOLTV
11:45 a.m.	German Cup, Freiburg at Bayern Munich	**TV:** ESPN2, ESPND
11:45 a.m.	England, Nottingham Forest at Leeds	**TV:** USA
3 p.m.	Copa Libertadores, River Plate at the Strongest	**TV:** beIN1, beINes
4:45 p.m.	South American U-17 Championship, Paraguay vs. Peru	**TV:** FS2
5 p.m.	CONCACAF Champions League, Atlas vs. Philadelphia (MLS)	**TV:** FS1, TUDN
5 p.m.	Copa Libertadores, Internacional at Independiente Medellin	**TV:** beIN1, beINes
7 p.m.	CONCACAF Champions League, Violette AC vs. Leon	**TV:** FS1, TUDN
7 p.m.	Copa Libertadores, Nacional vs. Metropolitanos	**TV:** beIN1, beINes
TENNIS		
7 a.m.	WTA Charleston Open, early rounds	**TV:** Tennis
3 p.m.	WTA Charleston Open, early rounds	**TV:** Tennis

E-NEWSPAPER BONUS

Subscribers get access to the daily digital replica of The Times print edition that includes a bonus sports page. Today, high school reporter Eric Sondheimer writes about the upcoming Arcadia Invitational. To view the e-newspaper, visit *latimes.com/enewspaper*.

NHL STANDINGS

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Pacific	W	L	OL	Pts	GF	GA
x-Vegas	48	22	7	103	257	220
x-KINGS	45	22	10	100	266	242
x-Edmonton	45	23	9	99	306	255
Seattle	42	26	8	92	267	241
Calgary	36	26	15	87	250	241
Vancouver	34	35	7	75	261	285
San Jose	22	39	15	59	223	291
DUCKS	23	44	10	56	195	317
Central	**W**	**L**	**OL**	**Pts**	**GF**	**GA**
x-Dallas	42	21	14	98	267	213
x-Minnesota	44	23	10	98	232	209
Colorado	45	24	6	96	252	207
Winnipeg	43	31	3	89	234	215
Nashville	38	30	8	84	213	225
St. Louis	35	35	7	77	251	286
Arizona	27	38	13	67	216	282
Chicago	24	46	6	54	186	277

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Metropolitan	W	L	OL	Pts	GF	GA
x-Carolina	49	18	9	107	248	196
x-New Jersey	48	21	8	104	266	216
x-NY Rangers	45	21	11	101	261	207
NY Islanders	39	30	9	87	227	214
Pittsburgh	38	29	10	86	248	249
Washington	34	34	9	77	240	243
Philadelphia	29	34	13	71	207	253
Columbus	24	44	8	56	203	303
Atlantic	**W**	**L**	**OL**	**Pts**	**GF**	**GA**
z-Boston	60	12	5	125	286	166
x-Toronto	45	21	10	100	258	211
x-Tampa Bay	45	26	6	96	267	231
Florida	39	31	7	85	272	260
Buffalo	37	31	7	81	270	276
Ottawa	37	34	6	80	244	251
Detroit	34	33	9	77	226	252
Montreal	30	41	6	66	219	284

Note: Overtime or shootout losses are worth one point.

x-clinched playoff spot; y-clinched division
z-clinched conference

RESULTS

VEGAS 4 AT MINNESOTA 3 (SO)	Pavel Dorofeyev scored twice in regulation and then had one of the Golden Knights' three scores in the shootout.
AT DALLAS 5 NASHVILLE 1	Jason Robertson had a goal and three assists to reach a 100-point season, and the Stars clinched a playoff spot.
AT SEATTLE 8 ARIZONA 1	Jared McCann scored twice to lead seven Kraken scorers as Seattle maintained the first wild card in the West.

TODAY'S GAMES

Edmonton at KINGS, 7:30 p.m.
Columbus at Toronto, 4 p.m.
Ottawa at Carolina, 4 p.m.
Philadelphia at St. Louis, 5 p.m.
Chicago at Calgary, 6 p.m.
Colorado at San Jose, 7:30 p.m.
Buffalo at Florida, 4 p.m.
Detroit at Montreal, 4 p.m.
Pittsburgh at New Jersey, 4 p.m.
Vegas at Nashville, 5 p.m.
Seattle at Vancouver, 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY'S GAMES

Edmonton at DUCKS, 7 p.m.
Tampa Bay at N.Y. Rangers, 4:30 p.m.
Calgary at Winnipeg, 4:30 p.m.

THURSDAY'S GAMES

KINGS at Vegas, 7 p.m.
Columbus at New Jersey, 4 p.m.
Ottawa at Florida, 4 p.m.
Washington at Montreal, 4 p.m.
Carolina at Nashville, 5 p.m.
Philadelphia at Dallas, 5:30 p.m.
Arizona at Seattle, 7:30 p.m.
Buffalo at Detroit, 4 p.m.
Minnesota at Pittsburgh, 4 p.m.
Toronto at Boston, 4 p.m.
Tampa Bay at N.Y. Islanders, 4:30 p.m.
N.Y. Rangers at St. Louis, 5 p.m.
Chicago at Vancouver, 7 p.m.
Colorado at San Jose, 7:30 p.m.

SPORTS

TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 2023 ∷ LATIMES.COM/SPORTS

Taking center stage at Lakers reunion

Clippers' Westbrook might play pivotal role against former team in crucial game.

By Andrew Greif

Before catching a flight back to Southern California late Saturday night, the player who spent high school in Lawndale and college in Westwood threw on a Dodgers cap.

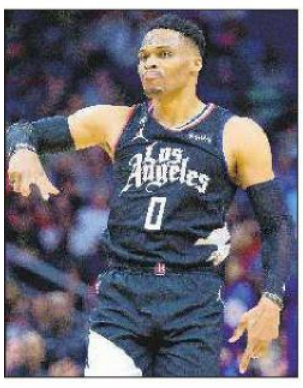
Russell Westbrook's history is intertwined with Los Angeles. That will continue Wednesday, when the 34-year-old point guard will be at the center of one of the most consequential games between the Clippers and Lakers in recent memory.

With each rival stuck in the muddled morass that is the Western Conference standings, and each desperately attempting to avoid the NBA's play-in tournament — with its slimmer margin for error than a seven-game first-round series — Westbrook will be the Clippers' starting point guard as he faces his former team for the first time since the Lakers dealt him at February's trade deadline.

Westbrook understands the scrutiny that will follow his reunion with the team whose union went from celebrated to sour in a year and a half, but said it would not change how he approaches the game.

"But it's an important

[See **Westbrook,** B6]



Matthew Hinton Associated Press

RUSSELL Westbrook has fit well with Clippers.

Travelin' man

Comparing Russell Westbrook's production for his five teams:

Team	PPG	APG	RPG
Okla. City	23.0	8.4	7.0
Houston	27.2	7.0	7.9
Wash.	22.2	11.7	11.5
Lakers	17.4	7.2	6.9
Clippers	15.2	7.8	4.8

NCAA MEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

CONNECTICUT 76, SAN DIEGO STATE 59

David J. Phillip Associated Press

JORDAN HAWKINS goes to the rim for the Huskies, whose late 9-0 run was ignited by a Hawkins' three in a bittersweet end for the Aztecs. "We put our school on the map," senior Keshad Johnson said.

HOUSTON SPOILERS

Huskies overwhelm to end Aztecs' magical season

By Mark Zeigler

HOUSTON — During the first timeout at NRG Stadium, they introduced the four astronauts chosen for NASA's Artemis II scheduled to circle the moon next year, the first crewed mission to venture that far into outer space in more than 50 years.

Then San Diego State's basketball players walked on the floor for their own lunar mission.

It failed. They missed the moon. They landed among the stars.

There were the inevitable tears in the locker room, the deafening silence, the palpable disappointment, following Connecticut's 76-59 victory against the Aztecs in the national championship game Monday night. But the fact that San Diego State was even here — 25 years after ranking among the most woebegone programs in Division I, 12 years after never having won an NCAA tournament game — offered a piece of bittersweet chocolate for a city still starving for its first major sports championship.

"San Diego State, we put our name on the map," senior forward Keshad Johnson said. "We put our school on the map. We're recognized now. Win or loss, I'm sure everybody respects us."

The Aztecs finish 32-7 and remain the first team in school or Mountain West history to reach the Elite Eight, Final Four or championship game, remain forever embedded in San Diego sports lore for the dramatic comebacks, for the buzzer beaters, for the magical ride.

They don't, however, become only the third team from the Pacific time zone to win a national title since John Wooden retired in 1975 (during the Final Four at the San Diego Sports Arena) and the UCLA dynasty ended.

The Huskies were too big, too long, too fast, too deep, too skilled, too focused, too tough, too everything. Too much.

The Aztecs went 11 minutes without a basket in the first half, shot 28.6% and had nine turnovers. It took until five minutes into the second half for their bench to finally score.

The Aztecs did what they have all tournament, though, and fearlessly fought back, trimming a 15-point deficit to five with five minutes to go and having the announced crowd of 72,423 on its feet, most of it roaring for the team that had zero trips past the Sweet 16 before two weeks ago.

"They were able this entire tour-

[See **Aztecs,** B7]

Grove delivers mixed outing

He's the first pitching prospect to start this season for Dodgers but likely not the last.

DODGERS 13
COLORADO 4

By Jack Harris

Dave Roberts doesn't like using the term "audition."

But every time the Dodgers call up one of their young starting pitchers to the major leagues this season, giving the manager and the rest of the organization a chance to see one of their homegrown talents up close, Roberts acknowledged it's an important opportunity.

To build a "track record of dependency," as Roberts described it.

To prove their readiness at the big league level, where opportunities should abound this year with the Dodgers' pitching staff.

And, most of all, to continue raising their stock in a crowded and competitive organizational pipeline.

The team began that process Monday night when right-hander Michael Grove became the first young pitcher from the highly ranked farm system to take a big league mound this season.

And after feeling "under the weather" for several days leading into his start, the 2018 second-round pick, who debuted with seven outings in the major leagues last season, offered a conflicting first impression in the Dodgers' 13-4 victory over the Colorado Rockies at Dodger Stadium.

Early on, Grove looked

[See **Dodgers,** B9]

Rendon told to sit four games

Angels third baseman suspended and fined by MLB for incident with fan last week.

ANGELS 7
SEATTLE 3

By Sarah Valenzuela

Angels third baseman Anthony Rendon was suspended and fined an undisclosed amount by Major League Baseball on Monday for an incident with a fan after the team's opening night game. He will miss four games, a stretch that began with the Angels' 7-3 win over the Mariners on Monday night in Seattle

After the Angels' loss to the Oakland Athletics on Thursday at Oakland Coliseum, Rendon was seen — in a video that was widely circulated the following day — grabbing the shirt of a fan in the stands and cursing at him as the team walked back to the clubhouse from the field.

Rendon elected to appeal his suspension and was in the lineup about three hours before the first pitch against the Mariners. MLB then reduced his suspension from five games to four.

On Saturday, Rendon said he could not comment on the incident with the fan because of the ongoing investigation.

"My emotions got the best of me," Rendon told reporters in Seattle after the

[See **Angels,** B9]

THE MASTERS

AT AUGUST NATIONAL GOLF CLUB, AUGUSTA, GA. | **TV:** THURSDAY-FRIDAY (ESPN); SATURDAY-SUNDAY (CHANNEL 2)

Their mini-versions of Augusta bring major joy

Fans re-create Masters glory with backyard replicas in homage to the famous course.

By Sam Farmer

Andrew Augustyniak has won the Masters more times than he can remember. It goes like this: He rolls a perfectly struck putt across the undulations of the 18th green, lifts his Scotty Cameron putter to the sky and waves to the gallery as the ball trickles into the cup.

Sometimes, there's even a witness.

In fairness, Augustyniak does enjoy a home-course advantage. He need only walk out the sliding-glass door in Gilbert, Ariz., and he's in a miniature Masters paradise. His backyard is like the back nine at Augusta National through the wrong end of a telescope. It's a replica of the holes from tee to green, a masterpiece in flawless artificial turf, complete with an authentic-looking leaderboard, a stone Hogan Bridge on No. 12, and a Rolex-style golf clock that reads "Augustyniak National."

"My wife and I were blessed with the opportunity to watch the Masters in 2018, and it absolutely changed my life," he said. "It validated the passion and love that I have for Augusta National. When we were figuring out what to do with our backyard here ... I wanted to re-create that feeling where you walk through the gates

[See **Masters,** B7]

Sam Farmer Los Angeles Times

INSPIRED AFTER attending the Masters, Andrew Augustyniak replicated the course at his Arizona home, complete with a Hogan Bridge and Rolex-style clock.

NICK KOZA For The Times

RODRICK PLEASANT, right, of Gardena Serra beats Devin Bragg of Los Alamitos in the 100-meter race Saturday at the Trabuco Hills Invitational.

PREP RALLY

Full speed ahead for Arcadia meet

By Eric Sondheimer

It's a big weekend for high school track and field. The best meet of the season is set for Saturday at Arcadia High. The Arcadia Invitational has produced many outstanding performances through the years, and Saturday's meet has the makings of another memorable day.

The girls' 4x100-meter relay will get things started fast, with defending state champion Gardena Serra having to face rising Carson, which ran a time of 45.74 seconds at the Texas Relays last week. State 200-meter champion Brazil Neal of Serra tuned up in the 100 with a time of 11.83 seconds at Trabuco Hills.

Serra's Rodrick Pleasant has never won the 100 at Arcadia, and when asked a couple of weeks ago how badly he wanted to win, he said, "Bad." He ran 10.40 seconds in his season debut at 100 meters Saturday at the Trabuco Hills Invitational. Pleasant is going to face competition from Jordan Washington of Long Beach Jordan in the 100 and from Dijon Stanley of Granada Hills in the 200.

Dylan Curtis of Redondo Union achieved a lifetime best in the pole vault at Trabuco Hills at 16 feet 1 inch, making him a contender Saturday.

Meagan Humphries of Castaic is becoming one of the most versatile track and field performers. She was known primarily as a high jumper but is branching out in the long jump, 200 and 400. Jada Gatlin of Mission Viejo went 50-8 in the girls' triple jump at the Trabuco Hills Invitational.

Baseball

The City Section finalized details to hold the Open Division and Division I championship baseball games on May 27 at Dodger Stadium. It will also extend the regular season by one week to help deal with recent rainouts, and the playoffs will take place over a two-week period instead of three weeks.

Logan Reddemann of Quartz Hill is having quite a season. He has given up one run in 40 innings with 56 strikeouts. He struck out 12 and threw a two-hit shutout in his latest outing, a 3-0 win over Valencia. And he has a 4.0 grade-point average.

Huntington Beach's 10th consecutive victory was a big one, an 8-1, nine-inning win over San Juan Capistrano JSerra in the championship game of the National High School Invitational in Cary, N.C. Sophomore Tyler Bellerose was named tournament most valuable player for Huntington Beach. He started the tournament with three scoreless innings and ended it giving up one run in six innings against JSerra.

Encino Crespi knocked off No. 1 Sherman Oaks Notre Dame 3-1 behind the reigning Mission League pitcher of the year, Isaiah Magdaleno**.** He threw 104 pitches in his first start of the year. The Celts needed him to play catcher until transfer student Landon Hodge became eligible and also wanted to rest his arm. Now that he's back with a vengeance, the Celts could be real Division 2 title contenders come playoff time.

Corona continued to show its outstanding pitching depth, winning two 10-inning games against rival Norco and winning all three Big VIII League games against the Cougars.

The National Classic began Monday in Orange County.

Softball

Orange Lutheran's Brianne Weiss pulled off the pitching performance of the season, striking out 20 in a 3-0 win over Chula Vista Mater Dei.

Ava Deb of Chatsworth Sierra Canyon delivered a two-out, two-run walk-off home run in a 5-4 win over Sherman Oaks Notre Dame. The Knights had taken a 4-3 lead in the top of the seventh on Ella Parker's second homer of the game.

Mia Sanchez of Anaheim Esperanza threw a no-hitter with eight strikeouts in a 1-0 win over Rancho Bernardo.

Freshman Maddison Kellogg of Burbank struck out 22 in 12⅔ innings in a 1-0 loss to Crescenta Valley.

Los Alamitos won the Carew Classic.

Volleyball

More than 1,500 packed Loyola Marymount to watch the renewal of the boys' volleyball rivalry between L.A. Loyola and Manhattan Beach Mira Costa on Friday night. Loyola, now the No. 1-ranked team in Southern Section Division 1, came away with a convincing victory.

Burbank Burroughs' streak of 47 consecutive home victories in league matches ended when Crescenta Valley defeated the Bears in a Pacific League match.

Lacrosse

The top teams in Southern Section boys' lacrosse have stayed consistent, with Mater Dei and Loyola ranked Nos. 1 and 2 in Division 1/2.

For girls, Foothill and Marlborough are No. 1 and No. 2.

Football

It's offseason time in football, but players are busier than ever working on getting stronger, faster and better

At West Hills Chaminade, there's not a day that goes by in which kicker Ryon Sayeri can't be seen on the field practicing his kicking or punting. Maybe that's a reason he made 13 of 16 field-goal tries last season, averaged 49 yards per punt and kicked a 61-yard field goal. His goal this fall is to challenge the state record for longest field goal, which is 64 yards by Erik Affholter of Oak Park in 1982.

Teams have been announcing their finalized schedules for 2023. One of the most intriguing openers will be Sierra Canyon playing JSerra and first-year coach Victor Santa Cruz. Sierra Canyon leads the high school football transfers tracker with three outstanding offensive players: quarterback Wyatt Becker (Sherman Oaks Notre Dame), wide receiver Kwazi Gilmer (Chaminade) and wide receiver Xavier Jordan (L.A. Cathedral).

Allegiance held its linemen competition last month and had players vote on their MVPs, with offensive linemen voting for defensive linemen and vice versa. The winners were defensive tackle Jireh Moe (Orange Lutheran), defensive end Luke Webb (JSerra), offensive tackle Mark Schroller (Mission Viejo) and offensive guard Dustin Foisia (Orange Lutheran).

Former L.A. Hamilton, Palisades and Harbor City Narbonne football coach Jack Epstein celebrated his 90th birthday with dozens of his former players in Redondo Beach. Hall of Fame quarterback Warren Moon was among the players he coached.

Notes ...

Junior pitcher Jackson Banuelos of Santa Clarita West Ranch committed to Cal State Northridge. ...

Jarrett Tossey is the new boys' and girls' water polo coach at Huntington Beach Edison. ...

Lake Balboa Birmingham agreed to play a nonleague football game in Texas on Sept. 22 at Steele High outside San Antonio. ...

Standout sophomore basketball player Brandon Benjamin left Anaheim Canyon and transferred to Mater Dei. ...

Mikah Ballew from Valencia committed to Portland for basketball. ...

Calabasas baseball coach Thomas Cassidy will also take on the job as athletic director for the Coyotes. ...

Sophomore defensive back Devin Bragg, who had transferred to Sierra Canyon, returned to Los Alamitos. ...

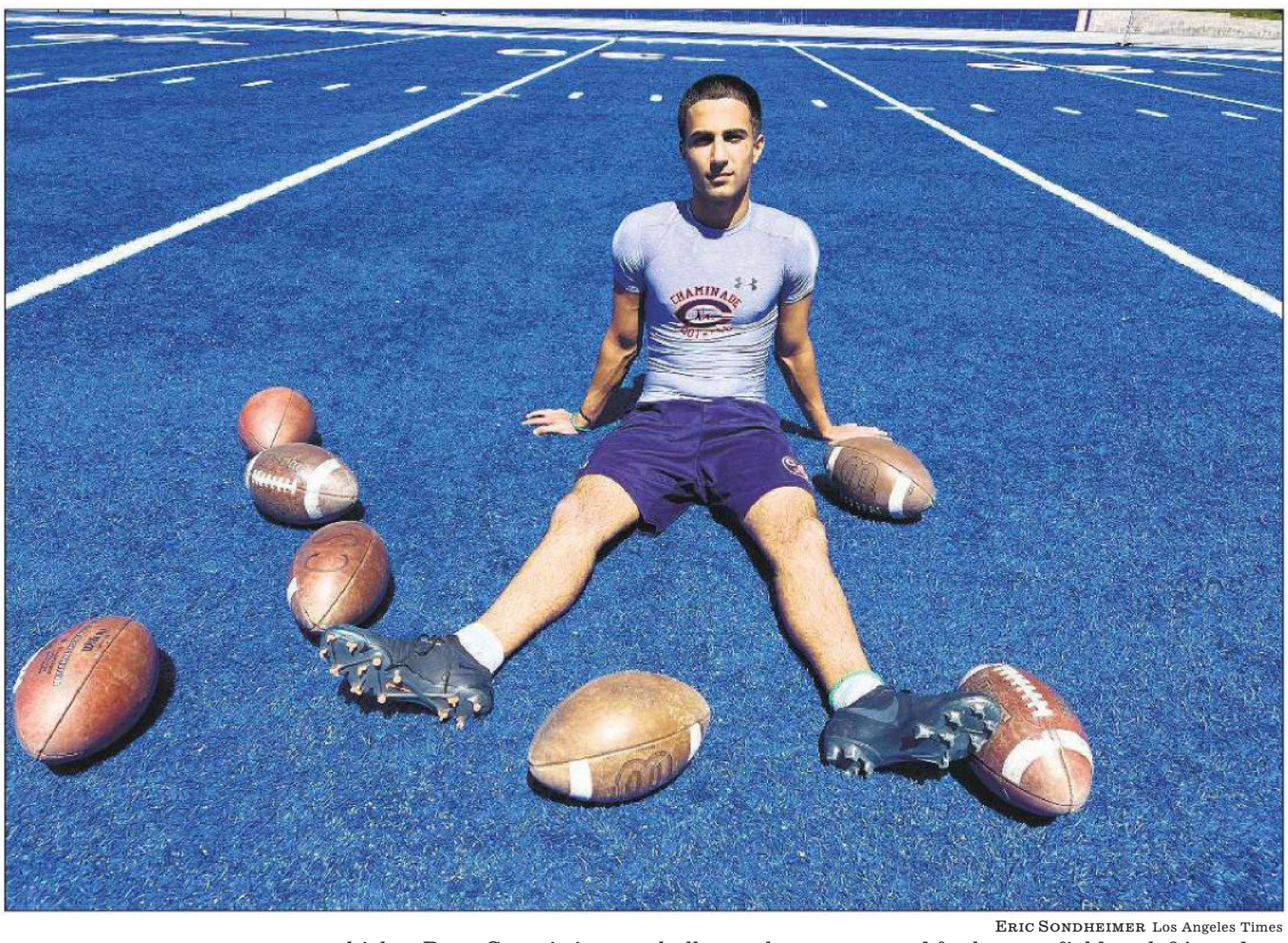
Johnny Argo is the new football coach at San Bernardino Arroyo. ...

Josh Beaty was hired as the boys' basketball coach at Fountain Valley. He has coached at Buena Park and Irvine Crean Lutheran. ...

After winning a state title, Valencia basketball coach Bill Bedgood said he would retire to watch his son, Bryce, for his senior year. Now Bryce has convinced his father to stay one more year. ...

David Perez resigned as football coach at Canoga Park. He had been head coach since 2020 and, before that, an assistant coach since 2002.

Did you enjoy this excerpt of our Prep Rally newsletter? Visit latimes.com/newsletters to sign up and get it delivered each week to your inbox.



ERIC SONDHEIMER Los Angeles Times

WEST HILLS CHAMINADE kicker Ryon Sayeri aims to challenge the state record for longest field goal, 64 yards, in the fall during his senior season. Sayeri made 13 of 16 field-goal tries last season and kicked a 61-yard field goal.

A TRUE LEGEND HAS BEEN CALLED UP.

VIN SCULLY
1927 - 2022
"The main thing, I want people to remember me as a good man, a good husband, a good father, a good grandfather. That's the most important thing of all."
Los Angeles Times
SPECIAL Los Angeles Times EDITION
1927-2022
Vin Scully
The Soundtrack of Los Angeles
Narrating Baseball. Narrating Life

Celebrate Vin Scully's life, legacy and nearly 7-decade career. Take home a piece of history with the August 6 special section. Or, get even more beautiful photographs and stories in "Vin Scully Magazine: The Soundtrack of Los Angeles." Remember Vin's greatest moments through these commemorative products and more.

Scan the QR code, or visit **shoplatimes.com/vinscully** to explore the collection.

SHOP LA Times

Los Angeles Times

CALENDAR

TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 2023 :: LATIMES.COM/CALENDAR

GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

L.A. METRO has gotten creative in its efforts to deter people from staying in stations such as Westlake/MacArthur Park.

Metro's not whistling a happy tune

Loud classical music in subway station aims to keep unhoused people moving. Is it creative, or just inhumane? And will it work?

BY JESSICA GELT

A battle is being waged at the Westlake/MacArthur Park Metro station near downtown Los Angeles. The weapon of choice? Loud classical music.

The classical music — along with floodlights at either end of the station platform — are part of a pilot program that L.A. Metro operations and security, in cooperation with law enforcement, began implementing at the station in January. In an email to The Times, Metro said the music is a royalty-free playlist it compiled of piano sonatas, symphony orchestra pieces and concertos, including some by Vivaldi, Beethoven and Mozart.

L.A. Metro's goal with the music and lights is to reduce crime and drive away unhoused people. But the use of music is divisive, with online commentators calling it an inhumane torture tactic. Critics also argue that it does nothing to address the root causes of the problems plaguing the station.

Music, classical and otherwise, has a long history of being used as a technique for discomfort and coercion. Heavy metal and hard rock drove strongman Manuel Noriega out of hiding at the Vatican's embassy in Panama City in 1989. The music of Metallica was used as a torture device against Iraqi detainees during the War on Terror and is listed on the notorious "Guantanamo Bay" playlist.

"You're trying to attract and make certain people feel comfortable based on the associations with classical music," says musicologist Lily E. Hirsch, author of "Music in American Crime Prevention and Punishment." "And you see that in fancy cheese shops that play classical music because they hope people will feel like they're a part of some elite upscale world and then they'll spend more money."

That feeling is not intrinsic to classical music, says Hirsch, but when the music is being used as a tool to achieve a goal — driving cer- [See **Metro,** E3]

WWE, UFC pair for new tag team

Heavyweights form $21.4-billion company, run by Ari Emanuel and Vince McMahon.

BY WENDY LEE AND STEPHEN BATTAGLIO

Ultimate Fighting Championship and World Wrestling Entertainment will combine to form a new $21.4-billion fighting sports and entertainment powerhouse, majority owned by UFC parent Endeavor Group Holdings.

The newly combined, publicly traded company, which does not yet have a name, will be led by Endeavor Chief Executive Ari Emanuel, the companies said Monday. Pro wrestling mogul Vince McMahon will serve the new company as executive chairman, the same title he held at WWE.

Beverly Hills-based Endeavor, which also owns Hollywood talent agency WME, will hold a 51% controlling stake in the new company. WWE shareholders will have a 49% interest. The combined firm intends to trade on the New York Stock Exchange under the stock symbol TKO.

Emanuel will continue in his role as CEO of Endeavor and Mark Shapiro will be president and chief operating officer of both Endeavor and the new company, which will be based in New York. Nick Khan will remain president of WWE. Dana White, the controversial and outspoken presi- [See **WWE,** E3]

He helped shape punk and pop

Sire Records' Seymour Stein, who signed Madonna, the Ramones and Talking Heads, has died. **E2**

WGA outlines its next move

The writers union is asking its 11,500 members to authorize a strike as talks with studios stall. **E2**

Comics **E4-5**
Puzzles **E4**

Trash-talking is just what's needed in women's sports

MARY McNAMARA

The biggest obstacle women's sports faces in this country is not a lack of talent, athletic stamina or even public interest.

It's pearls.

As in men clutching theirs every time a female sports star has the temerity to act like one.

This weekend, women's college basketball had three of the most exciting and widely viewed Final Four games in its history. Two major upsets — LSU's defeat of Virginia Tech and Iowa's win over South Carolina — led to a final in which sophomore Angel Reese and the deep bench of LSU overcame the phenomenal star power of Iowa junior Caitlin Clark and the team she has led to so many victories.

Full of ferociously competitive and gorgeously orchestrated play, these edge-of-your-seat games put the lie to the notion that women's sports are just not as exciting as men's.

But after LSU's hard-fought victory, all some people wanted to talk about was what they considered unladylike conduct.

In the final minutes of the game, Reese trash-gestured Clark, passing her hand in front of her face in a "you don't see me" move (created and made famous by WWE star turned actor John Cena) before pointing to her ring finger, indicating where the championship ring would land.

Clark, who scored 30 [See **NCAA,** E6]

The magic behind an epic chase

'Dungeons & Dragons' creators explain how a key sequence captures the spirit of the game.

BY TRACY BROWN

This story contains light spoilers for "Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves."

Paramount Pictures and eOne

THE CREATORS of "Dungeons & Dragons" used computer-generated effects as little as possible in a chase sequence featuring Doric, played by Sophia Lillis.

In "Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves," a bard, a barbarian, a sorcerer and a druid team up to pull off their biggest heist yet — and also save the world.

Much like in an adventure in the tabletop role-playing game on which the film is based, "Dungeon & Dragons," in theaters Friday, sees its heroes journey across the land on a series of missions to help them on their overall quest: to take down a certain traitorous rogue. And like any good dungeon master, directors Jonathan Goldstein and John Francis Daley, who [See **'D&D,'** E6]

Writers Guild asks members to authorize strike if contract expires

Union wants option to walk out on the table, citing lack of progress after 2 weeks of talks.

By Anousha Sakoui

The leadership of the Writers Guild of America is asking its 11,500 members to authorize a strike should they fail to reach an agreement on a new contract with the major Hollywood studios.

In a message to members, the guild's negotiators cited a lack of progress in talks that began last month.

"After two weeks at the bargaining table, they [the studios] have failed to offer meaningful responses on the core economic issues in any of the WGA's primary work areas — screen, episodic television and comedy-variety," the union's negotiators said. "They have listened politely to our presentations and made small moves in only a few areas, almost entirely coupled with rollbacks designed to offset any gains. In short, the studios have shown no sign that they intend to address the problems our members are determined to fix in this negotiation."

It is not uncommon for unions to seek a strike authorization from members in order to gain more leverage in bargaining. If approved by a majority of members, leaders could call a strike after the current three-year film and television contact expires on May 1. Online voting runs April 11-17.

The union and the studios, represented by the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, entered negotiations on March 20.

Hollywood has been on edge over rising expectations that writers will stage their first strike since a 2007-08 walkout, which lasted 100 days and disrupted Southern California's production economy.

The WGA has proposed demands worth $600 million, including increases in minimum pay and increases in residual payments from streaming, along with increased contributions to its health and pension plans.

Writers argue that despite the streaming boom, their median pay has fallen in the last decade, citing a WGA report.

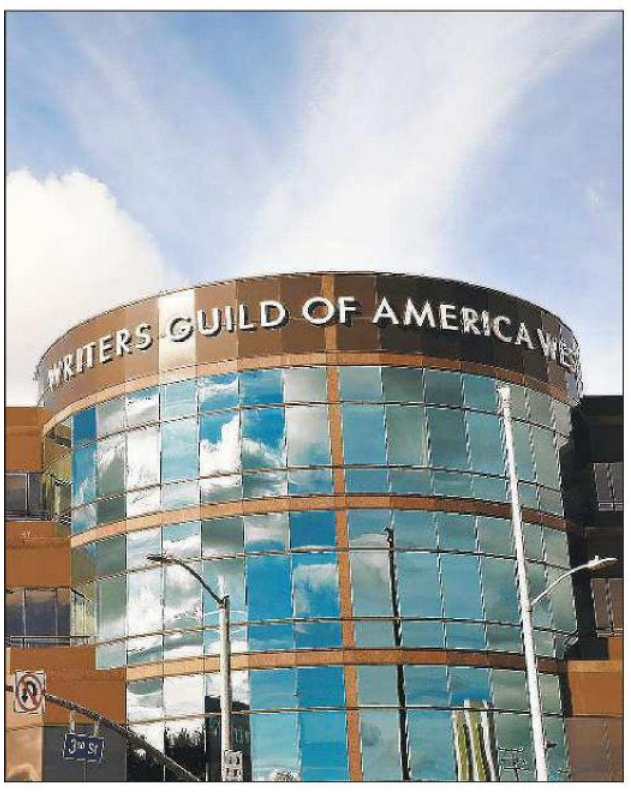
"The survival of writing as a profession is at stake in this negotiation," the WGA leaders said. "Over the past decade, while our employers have increased their profits by tens of billions, they have embraced business practices that have slashed our compensation and residuals and undermined our working conditions."

The last time the union asked members to vote on a possible strike was in 2017. The union ultimately negotiated a new contract without a strike.

Representatives of the AMPTP had no comment.

Some prominent writers, such as "The Walking Dead" showrunner Glen Mazzara, were already taking to social media to express their support for the strike authorization.

"WGA members must demonstrate our willingness to fight for the contract writers need and deserve by supporting a strike authorization vote," he wrote in a tweet.



Al Seib Los Angeles Times

THE WRITERS Guild, whose last walkout ended 15 years ago, wants its members to authorize a strike.

SEYMOUR STEIN, 1942 — 2023

Myung J. Chun Los Angeles Times

THE CENTER OF HIS LIFE
Seymour Stein, in 2017, had a passion for music from an early age. "From the time I was 9 years old, I knew I wanted to be in the music business," he said. It would take him to Billboard and beyond.

From Madonna to Ramones, an ear for the adventurous

Talking Heads and the Pretenders were also among iconic acts on his Sire record label.

By Stephen Thomas Erlewine

Seymour Stein, the record industry executive who helped shape the sound of 20th century pop music by signing the Ramones, Talking Heads, the Pretenders and Madonna to his Sire label, died Sunday in Los Angeles. He was 80.

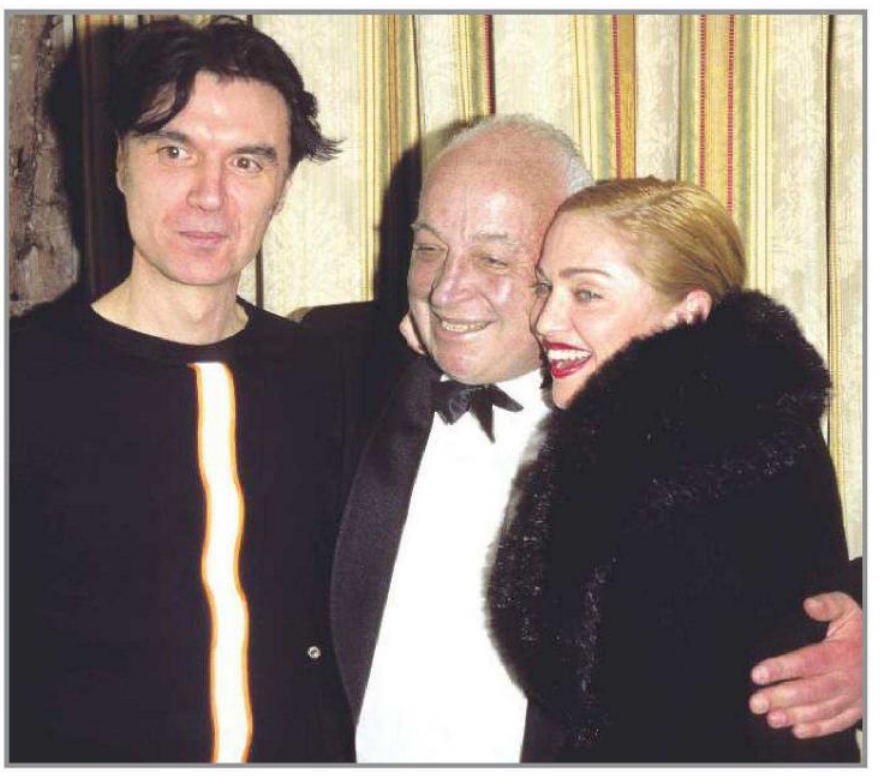
The cause of death was cancer, said his daughter, Mandy Stein.

Stein belonged to a rarefied group of music executives who gained fame on their own accord. His notoriety was so great and lasting that the Scottish indie-pop outfit Belle and Sebastian wrote a song chronicling his attempt to sign them to Sire in 1996, more than 20 years after the label's golden era began with the release of the first album by punk originators the Ramones in 1975.

Sire released some of the most adventurous music from punk and new wave acts. Stein brought Talking Heads, a cerebral CBGB cohort of the Ramones, to Sire in 1976, then expanded the label's roster with Chrissie Hynde's swaggering Pretenders and the noir-ish vistas of U.K. post-punk outfit Echo & the Bunnymen.

All other Sire signings were overshadowed by Madonna, a New York-based singer whose stylish dance pop refashioned the sound and appearance of pop in the 1980s. Stein famously signed Madonna while laid up in a hospital bed, and she stuck with the label as she became the biggest pop star in the world.

Stein's influence extended outside of Sire.



Kevin Mazur WireImage via Getty Images

THE SOUNDS OF POP
Stein, who helped co-found the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, is flanked by Talking Heads' David Byrne and Madonna at its induction dinner in 1996.

While acting as president of the label — he stayed in that position until his retirement in 2018 — he helped co-found the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1983. He was inducted into the institution in 2005.

But before Stein was a mover and shaker, he and his passion for music helped change the contours of the industry. As an intern at the music trade magazine Billboard in 1958, he was part of the team that developed the Hot 100, the chart that became the industry standard. In his 2018 memoir "Siren Song: My Life in Music," Stein wrote: "My business was turning great music into hit records."

Stein was born Seymour Steinbigle in Brooklyn, N.Y., on April 18, 1942. Popular music became the center of his life at an early age. In 2015, he said, "From the time I was 9 years old, I knew I wanted to be in the music business."

He made his first step into the business when he was 13, asking Billboard if he could copy old pop, country and R&B charts by hand. It took him two years, after which the magazine brought him aboard to write reviews. Stein joined Billboard after high school graduation.

By the early 1960s, Stein had turned his attention to record labels.

He interned with King Records, an R&B and country label based in Cincinnati that claimed James Brown as one of its biggest stars, before becoming a staffer in 1961. Syd Nathan, the label's founder, suggested to Seymour he shorten his last name to Stein.

He then joined Red Bird Records, a New York-based label founded by songwriters Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller and record man George Goldner.

Specializing in girl-group pop — its first big hit was "Chapel of Love" by the Dixie Cups, which went to No. 1 in 1964 — Red Bird collapsed in 1966, leaving Stein to partner with Richard Gottehrer, who had his own girl-group past as co-songwriter and co-producer of the Angels' "My Boyfriend's Back." The pair formed Sire Records in 1966, opening an office in the Brill Building.

Initially, Sire concentrated on licensing recordings from British or European acts for the U.S. market. While Sire stayed afloat for several years, it amounted to little more than a cult label, releasing British blues and prog rock. Occasionally, it'd release a noteworthy record: a couple of early Fleetwood Mac sessions when the band was led by Peter Green, plus albums by Climax Blues Band, Barclay James Harvest and Kevin Ayers.

Commercial success did not arrive until 1973, when Focus, a group of Dutch art-rockers, channeled their eccentricities into "Hocus Pocus," a bombastic blast of neo-classicism with a yodeled hook. It was weird enough to become a novelty smash, reaching the top 10 on the Billboard Hot 100.

The song's success shifted the power structure at Sire. Gottehrer decided to leave the label, while Stein concentrated on finding new recording artists.

Tipped off by his wife, Linda — she'd soon wind up as the band's manager — Stein hit pay dirt with the Ramones, the leather-clad purveyors of buzz-saw bubble gum.

The Ramones' eponymous 1975 debut didn't sell initially but helped gave Stein direction for Sire: He now would steer the label toward punk and its offshoots. Sire's next notable signing was Talking Heads, a kinetic, quirky outfit led by David Byrne that became one of the signature bands of post-punk and new wave.

Warner Bros. acquired Sire in 1978 but Stein remained the label's president, helping shape a distinctive identity for the imprint. He would sign such emerging rockers as London-by-way-of-Akron, Ohio's Pretenders and Minneapolis' Replacements while licensing records for the U.S. from renowned British indie labels Rough Trade and 4AD.

This meant Sire was the American home for such major acts as the Smiths, Depeche Mode, Echo & the Bunnymen, Erasure and My Bloody Valentine.

Sire showcased its roster on a series of CD compilations called "Just Say Yes" that now stand as time capsules of pre-Nirvana alternative rock.

Although Sire ruled the underground, it was also home to Madonna, one of the biggest pop stars of the 1980s and '90s. Stein signed her based on her demo for "Everybody." In short order, her self-titled 1983 debut generated four dance hits before "Lucky Star" and "Borderline" brought her into the pop top 10.

After 1984's "Like a Virgin," she'd be a fixture in pop culture, her success allowing Sire to branch into hip-hop with Ice-T and country with k.d. lang. Sire also became home to Lou Reed's comeback, which started with "New York," his label debut from 1988.

Stein remained active in the 1990s, but Sire wasn't as central to the culture after the rise of grunge early in that decade.

Over the next decades, it would develop notable acts such as Tegan and Sara and Regina Spektor, but by the 2010s, its cultural footprint had diminished. Stein continued to work at Sire and at Warner — he became a senior A&R executive for the parent label in 2013 — until his retirement in 2018.

Stein is survived by his daughter Mandy, a filmmaker specializing in music documentaries; three grandchildren; and Ann Wiederkehr, his sister. His former wife, Linda, was murdered by her assistant in 2007. The couple's other daughter, Samantha Jacobs, died of brain cancer in 2013.

LAEMMLE™ Info Line 310.478.3836
NOT AFRAID OF SUBTITLES
www.LAEMMLE.com

ROYAL — 11523 Santa Monica Blvd. — West L.A.
SPACE ODDITY PG-13 1:20 7:30
RIMINI 1:00 7:10
RODEO 4:20 PM
RETURN TO SEOUL R 4:10 PM
THE FORGER 4:00 PM
TEHRANTO 1:30 7:20

MONICA — 1332 Second Street — Santa Monica
ACIDMAN 1:00 7:30
IN VIAGGIO: THE TRAVELS OF POPE FRANCIS 3:00 PM
A THOUSAND AND ONE R 1:10 4:10 7:00
THE LOST KING PG-13 7:10 PM
TORI AND LOKITA 1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30
WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS? 1:20 4:20 7:10
MOVING ON R 5:20 PM
NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE: HAMLET NR 1:00 PM
UNZIPPED: AN AUTOPSY OF AMERICAN INEQUALITY 1:30 4:30 7:20

TOWN CENTER — 17200 Ventura Blvd. — Encino
THE JOURNEY: A MUSIC SPECIAL FROM ANDREA BOCELLI 7:00 PM
A GOOD PERSON R 1:10 4:10 7:10
SPINNING GOLD R 1:00 4:00 7:00
THE LOST KING PG-13 1:20 4:20 7:20
TORI AND LOKITA 3:05 7:30
MOVING ON R 1:00 5:20
THE QUIET GIRL PG-13 4:30 PM
THE FORGER 1:30 PM
TEHRANTO 7:20 PM

NEWHALL — 22500 Lyons Ave. — Santa Clarita
THE JOURNEY: A MUSIC SPECIAL FROM ANDREA BOCELLI 7:00 PM
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: HONOR AMONG THIEVES PG-13 12:50 4:00 7:10
A GOOD PERSON R 1:20 4:20 7:20
HIS ONLY SON PG-13 1:30 4:30 7:30
A THOUSAND AND ONE R 1:10 4:25 7:30
JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 4 R 12:50 3:55 7:15
SHAZAM! FURY OF THE GODS PG-13 1:00 4:10 7:20
CHAMPIONS PG-13 1:00 4:10

GLENDALE — 207 N. Maryland Ave — Glendale
ENYS MEN 7:30 PM
SUMMONING SYLVIA R 5:25 PM
A THOUSAND AND ONE R 1:10 4:20 7:30
JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 4 R 12:50 3:55 7:00
TORI AND LOKITA 1:30 7:20
THE QUIET GIRL PG-13 4:10 PM
RETURN TO SEOUL R 4:10 PM
NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE: HAMLET NR 1:00 PM
STONEWALLING 1:00 7:10

NoHo 7 — 5240 Lankershim Blvd. — No. Hollywood
CHRISSY JUDY 7:00 PM
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: HONOR AMONG THIEVES PG-13 12:50 4:00 7:10
A GOOD PERSON R 1:00 4:00 7:00
SPINNING GOLD R 1:00 4:10 7:20
A THOUSAND AND ONE R 1:20 4:20 7:20
JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 4 R 12:55 3:50 7:15
THE LOST KING PG-13 1:10 4:35 7:30
THE QUIET GIRL PG-13 1:30 4:30

CLAREMONT — 450 W. 2nd Street — Claremont
THE JOURNEY: A MUSIC SPECIAL FROM ANDREA BOCELLI 7:00 PM
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: HONOR AMONG THIEVES PG-13 12:50 4:00 7:10
A GOOD PERSON R 1:10 4:10
A THOUSAND AND ONE R 1:20 4:20
JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 4 R 1:00 7:00
THE LOST KING PG-13 7:30 PM
WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS? 7:00 PM
MOVING ON R 4:40 PM
NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE: HAMLET NR 1:00 PM

BARGAIN IN ( ) CC CLOSED CAPTION NSP NON-STANDARD PRICING FOR 4/4/2023 ONLY

Mixed reaction to Metro music mission

[**Metro,** from E1]
tain people away while welcoming others, for example — those cultural associations are manipulated.

When classical music is used in dark and aggressive ways, it can also feel dystopian and creepy, notes Hirsch, not unlike the mood of "The Silence of the Lambs." One Twitter user compared the music at MacArthur Park station to Stanley Kubrick's psychological horror film "A Clockwork Orange."

Sound is experienced differently in different environments, and it can be louder depending on where it is being heard. Decibels are the measure of sound intensity. In confined spaces such as a subway station, which has hard edges, high ceilings and plenty of echo-y metal and concrete surfaces for the sound to bounce off of, decibel levels will be higher.

The music in the Westlake/MacArthur Park Metro is not being played at fancy-cheese-shop levels: It clocks in at an average of 83 decibels on a handheld decibel meter, although during some string flourishes it peaks at 90 dB (depending on where in the station you're standing, and your proximity to the speakers). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website puts decibel levels between 80 and 85 on par with gas-powered lawnmowers and leaf blowers, and notes that damage to hearing is possible after two hours of exposure.

In an email to The Times, L.A. Metro spokesperson Dave Sotero wrote that "the music is not loud" at MacArthur Park, saying the compositions inside the station are being played at 72 dB.

A handheld meter registered certain musical phrases at 73 dB, but rarely — it was typically much louder than that. Sotero also said the music in the station is quieter than walking on the sidewalk outside the station, which he said exceeds 80 dB. A trip aboveground with a handheld dB meter found the ambient street noise — street vendors chatting, kids playing and laughing, buses whooshing by — hovering at an average of 72 dB.

There is a clear disconnect between what transit riders and the unhoused are experiencing in the subterranean confines of the station and L.A. Metro's official line about the music's volume.

On a recent Monday afternoon in the station, commuters pace the sticky, trash-strewn platform, and a number of unhoused people rest on various concrete benches. A driving, high-energy piece of classical music blares, with ecstatic strings and many high notes punctuated by somewhat ominous low notes on keyboards. The four-minute composition "Immaterial," by contemporary classical composer Adrián Berenguer, is being played on loop. (Berenguer did not respond to multiple requests for comment about this use of his music. It is unclear whether this song is royalty-free, as Metro stated.)

When two police officers approached two unhoused people and tried talking to them on Monday, one person cupped her hand to her ear. An officer leaned closer and shouted. The unhoused people nodded and began gathering their belongings to go, squinting in the bright spotlight.

It appears that the loud classical music is working at cross-purposes here, says Hirsch. She notes there is a history of classical music being used in public places, including town squares and outside various businesses, as a way to signal that certain people are wanted and others are unwanted.

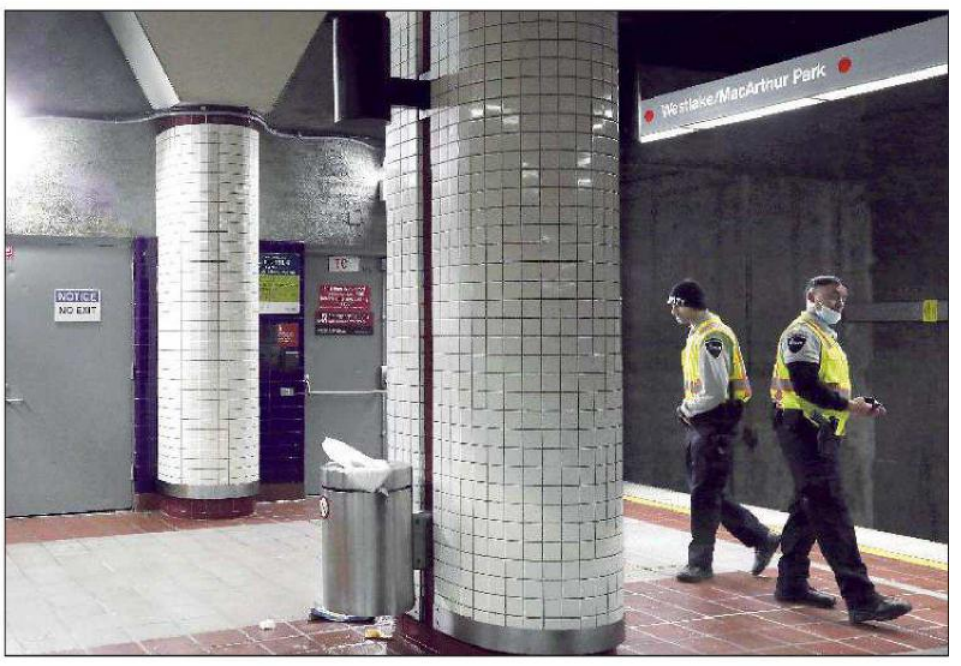
"It's like a bird marking its territory where you hear the signal and you go, 'OK, this is not for me. This is for the older money crowd,'" she says. "And that technique seems to work. There are examples of teenagers leaving an area that's playing classical music, not because they don't like the music but because of the associations." In fact, 7-Eleven has used classical music outside Los Angeles-area stores to deter loitering since 2019.

The problem with this approach, says Hirsch, "is you're creating hierarchies of sound" by making it clear that an area belongs to certain privileged groups and not other people.

"And you're not solving the problem," she adds. "You're just pushing the problem to another spot."

The volume of the music at Westlake/MacArthur Park station makes it an outlier in this way, adds Hirsch, because the high decibel level intrinsically makes the station feel unwelcoming to *anyone* passing through. (One commuter said on Wednesday that the music was so loud that he might not continue riding Metro.)

L.A. Metro is undoubtedly in crisis. A recent Times story reported that 22 people have died of suspected overdoses on Metro buses and trains so far this year, and that serious crime — including rape, aggravated assault and robbery — is up 24% for 2002 compared with 2021.



GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

SECURITY officers patrol under a floodlight at Westlake/MacArthur Park station. Crime has increased on the system, with 22 overdose deaths so far this year.

LOUD classical music playing overhead didn't deter this man from sleeping on his stuff at the station.

A Times 404 video noted that Metro spends between $150 million and $200 million annually on policing, but a majority of emergency calls weren't answered by law enforcement assigned to Metro.

In an email to The Times, Sotero wrote that the music is being used "to restore safety at the transit station" and "as means to support an atmosphere appropriate for spending short periods of time for transit customers who wait an average of 5 to 10 minutes for the next train to arrive."

The transit authority says the strategy has resulted in an "improvement in public safety," citing a "75 percent reduction in calls for emergency service, an over 50 percent reduction in vandalism, graffiti and cleanups, and a nearly 20 percent drop in crime."

Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis, who is also a Metro board member, issued a statement to The Times noting that she is working with the organization to introduce "care first" strategies to the station and plaza, and that she supports piloting safety interventions that "introduce alternatives to deploying additional armed law enforcement on the system."

Yet the current alternative of elevated volume, coupled with repetition, is a way that music has been used as torture throughout history, says Hirsch. Constant exposure to loud music can disrupt sleep and thought and eventually make people lose their connection to themselves. In the 30 minutes a reporter spent in the station this week, the same piece of music was on loop — the same music was again playing on Wednesday when a Times photographer visited the station.

Isis Soto, an unhoused man sitting in the station on a recent Wednesday, said he didn't mind the loud orchestras and strings. "I enjoy classical music," he says. "It wouldn't keep me out. It will help keep me down here longer."

Times photographer Genaro Molina contributed to this report.

Combined WWE-UFC will dominate fighting sports

[**WWE,** from E1]
dent of UFC, will remain in his role.

"Together, we will be a $21+ billion live sports and entertainment powerhouse with a collective fanbase of more than a billion people and an exciting growth opportunity," McMahon said in a statement Monday.

The deal values WWE at $9.3 billion. Endeavor is contributing UFC at an enterprise value of $12.1 billion. Both Endeavor and WWE will contribute cash to the new business. The deal is expected to close in the second half of this year.

UFC and WWE reported combined annual revenue of $2.4 billion at the end of their fiscal 2022 year, growing at a rate of 10% annually since 2019.

Reports of the impending deal emerged over the weekend as WWE's WrestleMania 39 was being held at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood. Emanuel had ringside seats at the event.

The deal comes after a period of turmoil at WWE.

The 77-year-old McMahon, who took over his father's regional wrestling promotion business and turned it into a global media brand, announced his retirement in July following reports that company money was used to pay off people who alleged sexual harassment.

But McMahon recently returned as executive chairman, and WWE announced in January it had hired an financial advisor to facilitate a sale.

Multiple parties were rumored to be in the running for the popular asset at one point, including ESPN owner Walt Disney Co., Comcast's NBCUniversal and Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund.

Endeavor's WME and management company IMG has represented WWE for more than two decades.

"We've casually mentioned over the years since we got into sports ownership, how much we thought we could do for the WWE inside of the Endeavor flywheel, and there was nothing more than, 'I agree' and some chuckles," Shapiro said.

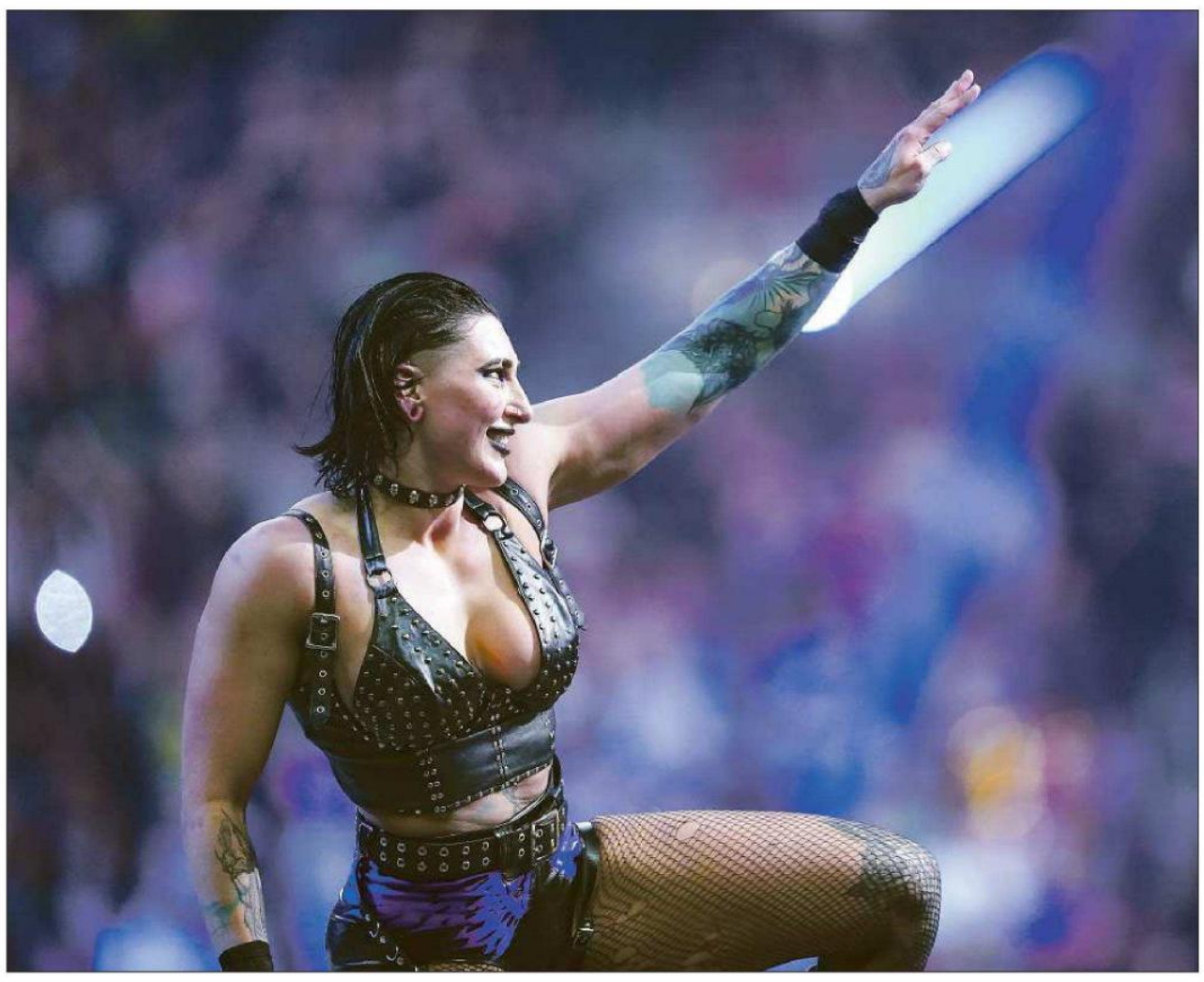
The process was "competitive," but Endeavor knuckled down last week on the negotiations and the deal was finalized late Sunday night, Shapiro said.

In a CNBC interview, McMahon said the recent scandal had no bearing on the decision to sell the business that his family has controlled for 70 years. "Things have to evolve," McMahon said. "This is the right business decision. This is the right family decision."

Asked about his legacy, McMahon said, "I've made mistakes both personally and professionally in my 50-year career. I owned up to every single one of them and I've moved on."

"He's had due process with regard to the internal investigation that was done, and he's taking responsibility for all of his actions, and that's all we can ask," Shapiro said. "We're not here to cast any more judgment beyond that."

Endeavor stock closed at $22.52 a share on Monday, down about 6%. WWE stock closed at $89.30 a share, down 2%.



ALEX BIERENS DE HAAN Getty Images

RHEA RIPLEY after winning the WWE Royal Rumble. The WWE will combine with UFC for a new firm.

WWE is a significant provider of live TV programming, which has become more valuable to networks as viewers have shifted to streaming video for scripted movies and series.

WWE has media rights deals with NBCUniversal, which airs "Monday Night Raw," and Fox Corp., which carries "Friday Night Smackdown" on its broadcast network. The deals expire at the end of 2024, but it remains an open question whether there will be a bidding war that increases the cost of those rights.

Live sports has been an area of increasing investment by streamers and Hollywood talent agencies. Amazon pays $1 billion annually to stream 15 Thursday-night NFL football games, while Apple TV+ has agreements with Major League Baseball and Major League Soccer to carry games. In recent years, Hollywood talent agencies also have increased their ownership in sports representation firms.

"Endeavor's experience in broadcast rights boasts well for new deal negotiations with any service, and now with a combined UFC and WWE we could see a tremendous bidding war take shape for the combat and entertainment sports programming," said Elizabeth Parks, president and chief marketing officer for research firm Parks Associates.

Her firm estimates revenue from sports streaming services will increase from around $13 billion last year to more than $22 billion in 2027.

But some streamers, including Netflix and Warner Bros. Discovery, have trimmed expenses by laying off staff and cutting programs in an uncertain economic environment.

"The biggest challenge in the marketplace now is that every media company, every distributor, has said that they intend to cut back on content spend, so they're fighting against that tide," said Brandon Ross, a partner with LightShed Partners.

Shapiro said he's confident about the state of media rights when it comes to sports.

"Networks and platforms are not cutting back on sports," Shapiro said. "We're at a high when it comes to sports rights and they're heavily in demand both at the gate and on screen."

WWE continues to be able to draw large crowds — the April 1-2 event at SoFi Stadium broke the company's gate records, at more than $18 million, according to people familiar with the matter.

"Live entertainment is showing that it can drive viewership, particularly at a particular point in time in a way that scripted programming or content can't," said Brett Sappington, vice president of market research firm Interpret.

This is the latest deal for Endeavor, which went public in April 2021 after a previous IPO attempt fell apart. The earlier failed public offering was a rare public setback for the brash Emanuel.

Executives said they saw opportunity for UFC and WWE to join forces.

Emanuel called it a "transformational step in Endeavor's journey" in a recorded webcast on Monday about the deal. Endeavor has bet big on its ability to create new business between its different areas of strength, such as representing actors and athletes and putting on live events.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to bring together two leading pure play sports and entertainment companies that operate in the most attractive parts of the media ecosystem," Emanuel said. "We know the business and are confident in what Endeavor can deliver to unlock even more growth and profitability."

Endeavor began in 1995 after Emanuel and three other ICM agents (Rick Rosen, Tom Strickler and David Greenblatt) defected to form their own agency and all put up their homes for collateral to get a $500,000 line of bank credit. Endeavor merged with the older William Morris Agency in 2009.

Since then, Endeavor has grown into an entertainment giant in a series of acquisitions that has taken its business beyond talent representation.

The company in 2016 bought a majority stake in UFC, the popular mixed martial arts league that gained a loyal audience and attracted controversy because of its violence and the over-the-top personalities of some of its top athletes. Endeavor took full ownership of UFC in 2021.

Other notable acquisitions include live events company On Location and Professional Bull Riders.

Times staff writers Houston Mitchell and Stacy Perman and the Associated Press contributed to this report.

COMICS

SUDOKU

				3				2
	1							
	9		2		1	3		7
9	2					5		
		3	1		9	7		
		4					1	8
		9	7		2	4	5	
							3	
6				5				

Level: Gentle

	2	6			3
		3			2
	4		3		
6			4	1	

Level: Gentle

1	5	2	6	7	8	4	9	3
7	9	8	3	4	5	2	1	6
6	3	4	1	2	9	7	8	5
4	1	9	5	8	6	3	2	7
3	7	6	2	1	4	8	5	9
8	2	5	9	3	7	1	6	4
5	4	1	7	6	2	9	3	8
2	6	7	8	9	3	5	4	1
9	8	3	4	5	1	6	7	2

6	5	1	3	2	4
2	4	3	1	5	6
1	6	5	2	4	3
4	3	2	5	6	1
3	2	4	6	1	5
5	1	6	4	3	2

4/4/23

©2023 The Mepham Group. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency. All rights reserved.

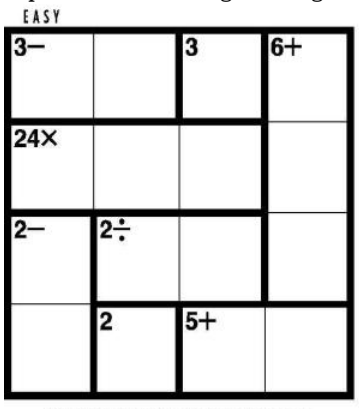
Solutions to Monday's puzzles

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 or 2-by-3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 (or 1 to 6 for the smaller grid). For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit *www.sudoku.org.uk*.

KENKEN

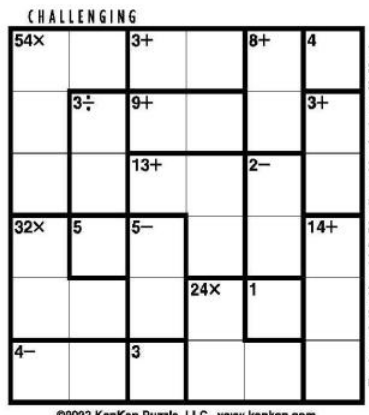
Every box will contain a number; numbers depend on the size of the grid. For a 6x6 puzzle, use Nos. 1-6. Do not repeat a number in any row or column. The numbers in each heavily outlined set of squares must combine to produce the target number found in the top left corner of the cage using the mathematical operation indicated. A number can be repeated within a cage as long as it is not in the same row or column.

EASY



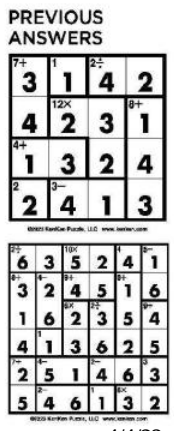
©2023 KenKen Puzzle, LLC www.kenken.com

CHALLENGING



Trademark KenKen, LLC Distributed by Andrews McMeel
©2023 KenKen Puzzle, LLC www.kenken.com

PREVIOUS ANSWERS



4/4/23

HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis

Aries (March 21-April 19): You're able to stay in the now for longer and longer, a discipline that enhances your experiences.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): If you're not happy in your role, your work will suffer and so will you. What would it take to make yourself more comfortable?

Gemini (May 21-June 21): You'll deal with drama in a fair and impartial manner. This is why people trust you and ask for your input.

Cancer (June 22-July 22): Today, you'll get moving and stay in motion. Don't worry about progress. Assume it's all progress. Every step is headed somewhere.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): Growing up involves experimentation and mistakes. With patience, you'll figure out what works for you.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You're headed toward an impasse. Disagreement makes progress impossible. It's an opportunity to decide what's worth fighting for.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): The way to resolve negative feelings is to say yes to them. Acceptance is the starting line to happiness.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): Tonight features comfortable conversation about nothing much; the noise is reassuring.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Though you can learn through cautionary examples, the very best way will be learning from your own experience.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Most people are poor judges of what will make them happy. Go deeper into what interests you and you'll accidentally land in a joyful place.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Loved ones want to see you content, and they'll help you however they can if you ask. Tonight, you can avoid bad timing with good observing.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): Optimism wanes. If someone or something is siphoning your vitality, you'll handle it, and then brightness returns.

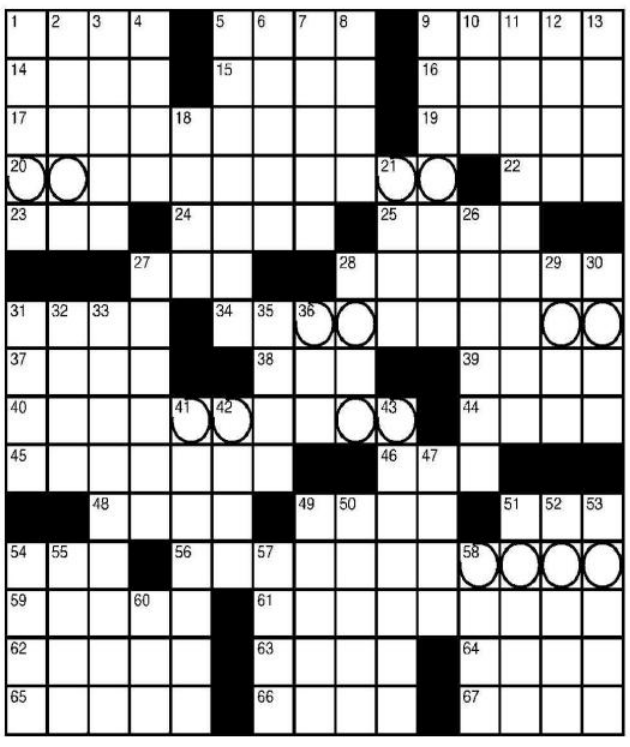
Today's birthday (April 4): It's your year of endearment. The sweet actions of others warm your heart. Your way of being in the world has others pulling you in closer. Bonds become tighter and more reliable. You'll grow your skills on challenging work. More highlights: a fun makeover of an environment, a completely random stroke of financial luck and an age-old excellent decision finally paying off for you. Leo and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 10, 4, 33, 19 and 17.

Mathis writes her column for Creators Syndicate Inc. The horoscope should be read for entertainment.

CROSSWORD

Edited By Patti Varol and Joyce Nichols Lewis
By Sean Ziebarth

© 2023 Tribune Content Agency



ACROSS
1 Lasting mark
5 Hairstyle with upturned ends
9 Neckwear worn by Fred in "Scooby-Doo"
14 Worker's compensation
15 More than fix up
16 "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" spinoff
17 "Words fail me!"
19 Mexican title
20 Muppet with blue feathers and a black unibrow
22 __-la-la
23 Flower bed tool
24 Poems that may begin "For a ... "
25 __ before: deadline words
27 "No seats" sign
28 Access ticket at a snowy resort
31 Farm mom
34 Ceramic piece in a kitchen backsplash, say
37 Burn soother
38 "Parlez-vous français?" reply
39 Cabbage dish
40 Laryngeal projection
44 Belief systems
45 Fill-in-the-blanks diversion
46 Dudes
48 Memory unit
49 Naval lockup
51 Journalist Koppel
54 Good friend
56 Going-out-of-business bargain event, and an apt description of this puzzle's circles
59 Vinegary stew of Filipino cuisine
61 Zoom call, say
62 "Attack!"
63 Genesis garden
64 Reusable bag
65 Lifts
66 Home made of sticks
67 Zig or zag

DOWN
1 Sound of a clean jump shot
2 Crème de __: sweet liqueur
3 Athlete's best effort
4 Tenant's monthly expense
5 Liberty
6 Structure with high-water marks
7 "Any more bright __?"
8 Early Atari release
9 "__ and Old Lace"
10 That woman
11 Air lines?
12 Skunkiness
13 Stanford basketball coach VanDerveer
18 God of Thunder
21 God of Mischief
26 Chooses to join
27 Appropriate
28 Cruise (along)
29 Grand __: bases-loaded homer
30 Fixes with thread
31 Hat-tipping word
32 Actor Alan honored with a SAG Life Achievement Award in 2019
33 Highway barricade
35 "Clumsy me!"
36 Slangy greeting
41 "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" and 16-Across, e.g.
42 Cain's brother
43 Prestigious
47 Waffle-maker
49 Less-played song, usually
50 Harley outings
51 Chevrolet SUV model
52 Fill with joy
53 Turn aside
54 Historian's field
55 Sarah McLachlan ballad
57 Pizza cooker
58 "SNL"-like show filmed in Canada
60 Spelling contest

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

S	C	R	A	P	E			S	L	O		V	A	T
T	E	E	T	E	R		S	P	A	N		I	D	O
E	L	B	O	W	G	R	E	A	S	E		C	O	W
P	L	U	M	S		O	T	I	S		W	E	R	E
S	I	S	I		J	O	H	N	O	L	I	V	E	R
			C	L	E	F			S	E	R	E		
B	O	O		E	A	T	I	N		T	E	R	S	E
R	U	N		S	N	O	C	A	T	S		S	A	Y
A	R	I	E	L		P	E	P	S	I		A	X	E
		O	B	E	Y			K	A	N	T			
W	I	N	B	Y	A	H	A	I	R		R	E	D	S
E	N	D	S		C	O	I	N		M	I	X	U	P
A	D	O		S	H	O	W	S	T	O	P	P	E	R
R	I	M		E	T	T	A		I	M	L	A	T	E
S	E	E		A	S	S			T	S	E	T	S	E

4/4/23

BRIDGE

By Frank Stewart

"Did Noah keep the bees in his Ark hives?" — graffiti

When Noah wasn't on the deck, they played bridge on the Ark. Noah declared today's four spades. He won the first club with dummy's ace and led a diamond to his king. Ham as West won and led a second club.

Noah won and belatedly led the king of hearts, and Shem, East, took the ace and led his last diamond. Noah won and craftily led the jack of trumps, but East ducked. When Noah next ruffed a diamond with dummy's nine of trumps, Shem overruffed and returned a trump, and Noah had a diamond to lose.

"I needed foresight to make it," Noah sighed.

"If you had foresight," Ham said, "you'd swat those two mosquitoes we have on board."

South does best to lead the king of hearts at Trick Two. He wins the club return, pitches a diamond on the queen of hearts and leads a diamond: deuce, king, ace. He can ruff the next club, cash the A-K of trumps, take his queen of diamonds and ruff a diamond with the nine of trumps to make his game.

You hold: ♠ 9 4 3 ♥ K Q 8 6 4 ♦ 9 4 ♣ A K 3. You open one heart. Your partner bids one spade. What do you say?

Answer: You had a mandatory opening bid with three Quick Tricks. You also have a mandatory rebid since partner's response is unlimited and forcing. A rebid of two hearts would promise a longer suit. I would accept a bid of 1NT. I would reluctantly try a raise to two spades. If partner passes, the contract may be no worse than any other.

South dealer
E-W vulnerable

NORTH
♠ 9 4 3
♥ K Q 8 6 4
♦ 9 4
♣ A K 3

WEST
♠ None
♥ J 9 5 3
♦ A J 10 8 3
♣ J 10 9 5

EAST
♠ Q 7 6 5
♥ A 10 7
♦ 7 2
♣ Q 8 6 2

SOUTH
♠ A K J 10 8 2
♥ 2
♦ K Q 6 5
♣ 7 4

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Opening lead – ♣ J

Tribune Content Agency

ASK AMY

Taxing issue in the family

Dear Amy: I'm a retired Army officer and since 2008 have deferred all decisions about my finances to my wife, who has an MBA.

For the past five years, she did our taxes and I never even had the chance to review them. One year we owed $40,000, and this year we owed $16,000.

I asked to see our return tonight and suggested that we may want a professional to review the return. The response was, "We don't need an accountant!"

I earn $215,000 and she earns $150,000 annually, and I really don't know where the money goes. I hope to retire in five years, but I feel I need a neutral third-party professional to advise.

Not Informed

Dear Not Informed: You say you are retired from the military, but you are obviously working in another field now and looking toward your second retirement. You and your wife are high earners.

This ignorance is on you. You are sharing your life with someone who has expertise in finance, and yet you have surrendered all of your personal fiscal responsibility to her, when you could have spent these last years learning from her.

Most of us would be happy to turn over the responsibility to file taxes to another competent person. But you still have a duty to know and understand where your earnings are going, how they're being spent and how well you are set up for your retirement.

Your wife is obviously responding very defensively to your suggestion. This is something of a red flag, but I suggest that before going def-con on this topic, you should ask her to review all of your finances, retirement funds and tax issues with you.

You should have full access to all joint accounts and those that bear your name, including passwords and the ability to review statements regularly. You should then keep up with these accounts by checking them regularly.

You two should be full partners in your household finances. If your wife refuses to participate in this effort, then you have a serious problem, which a forensic accountant might help you to sort out.

Dear Amy: I am a 26-year-old stay-at-home-mom. I absolutely love it. My issue is that living in the country (15 minutes from any town) makes it hard for me to make friends.

I haven't worked in four years. I don't have Facebook or any social media. I love my husband's friends, but it would also be nice to have my own friends who have kids for my kids to play with.

Do you have any tips for me to make my own friends and to find other stay-at-home parents so that my kids can get to know other children?

Wanting Some Friends

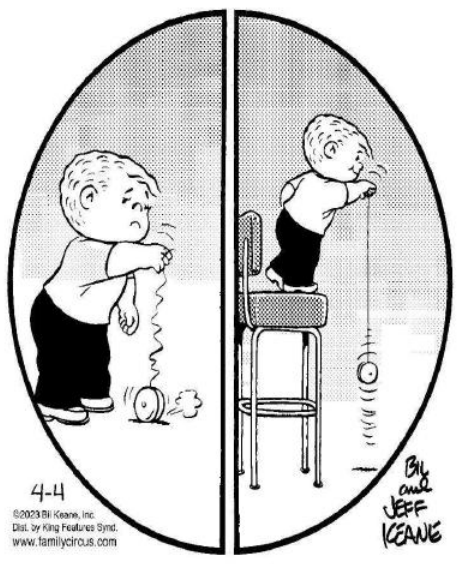
Dear Wanting Some Friends: My first suggestion is that you take your kids to the library! Most public libraries host storytimes for children, and this is a great way to meet other families with young kids.

While at the library, check out other resources for families in town. These might include swimming lessons at the YWCA, art classes and various scheduled playgroups.

It might feel awkward for you to be so intentional about making friends, but in adulthood, this is often the only way to do it. The good news is that you have your children to pave the way.

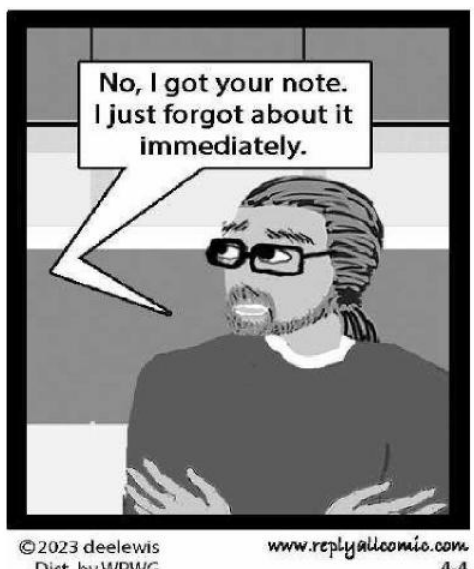
Email questions to Amy Dickinson at *askamy@amydickinson.com*.

FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



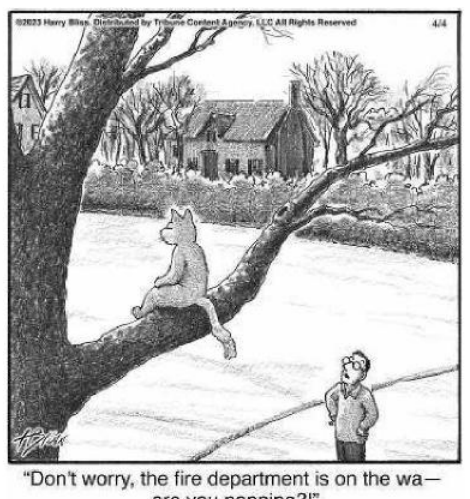
DENNIS THE MENACE By Hank Ketcham

REPLY ALL LITE By Donna Lewis



MARMADUKE By Brad & Paul Anderson

BLISS By Harry Bliss



SPEED BUMP By Dave Coverly

COMICS

LA CUCARACHA By Lalo Alcaraz

CRABGRASS By Tauhid Bondia

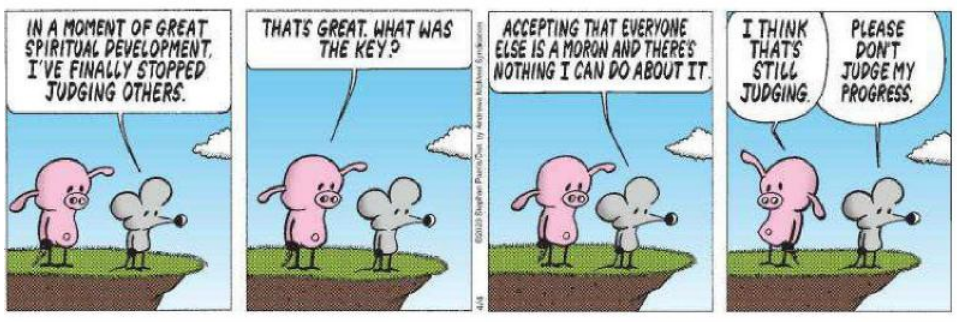
GROUNDED: DAY 2
PROBABLY THE WORST THING ABOUT BEING LOCKED UP IS THE BOREDOM.
FORTUNATELY FOR ME, THEY CAN'T LOCK UP THE POWER OF IMAGINATION!
POOF
WELL, SHOOT.

CANDORVILLE By Darrin Bell

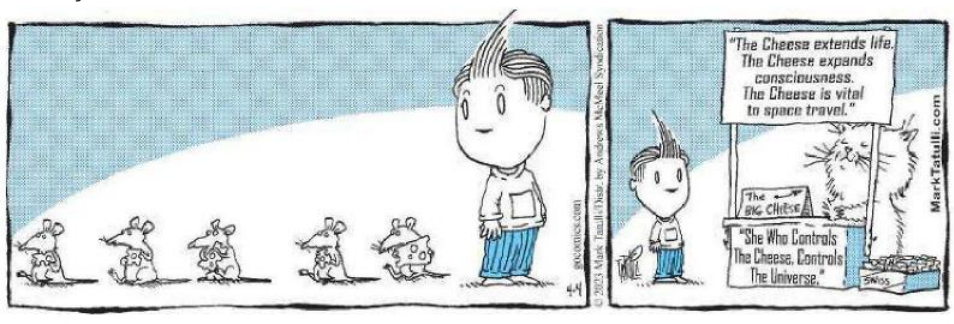
I'M TIRED OF YOU CALLING ME A LIAR.
WHACHOO-MEAN?
EVER SINCE I STARTED A LONG-DISTANCE RELATIONSHIP, YOU'VE IMPLIED THAT I'M MAKING IT ALL UP!
WHACHOOTALKIN' 'BOUT, BIG LI? I AIN'T IMPLIED NOTHIN'!
I BEEN ARTFUL AN' CLEVER 'BOUT IT, SO THE MORE APPROPRIATE TERM BE "INGINUATED."

HALF FULL By Maria Scrivan

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE By Stephan Pastis


IN A MOMENT OF GREAT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT, I'VE FINALLY STOPPED JUDGING OTHERS.
THAT'S GREAT. WHAT WAS THE KEY?
ACCEPTING THAT EVERYONE ELSE IS A MORON AND THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT.
I THINK THAT'S STILL JUDGING.
PLEASE DON'T JUDGE MY PROGRESS.

LIO By Mark Tatulli


"The Cheese extends life. The Cheese expands consciousness. The Cheese is vital to space travel."
The BIG Cheese
"She Who Controls The Cheese, Controls The Universe."
MarkTatulli.com

ZITS By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

TODAY MY DAD SAID "OKIE DOKIE" TO ME.
UN-IRONICALLY??
YEAH. AND THEN HE TOLD ME AN ELEPHANT JOKE.
OH MAN.
HE MAY BE PAST THE POINT OF NO RETURN, DORK-WISE.
IF IT WALKS LIKE A DORK, AND TALKS LIKE A DORK...

TUNDRA By Chad Carpenter

GROSS. A COCKROACH. AT LEAST IT'S DEAD.
SORRY, LADY. I'M JUST SUNNING MYSELF. I'LL BE DANCING ON YOUR TOOTHBRUSH AGAIN TONIGHT.
4-4
©Tundra 2023
www.tundracomics.com

SIX CHIX By Bianca Xunise

FRAZZ By Jef Mallett

SO "SPEEDO" IS SINGULAR.
THAT'S WHAT I WAS SAYING.
THOUGH I HAVE HEARD PEOPLE REFER TO "A PAIR OF SPEEDOS."
AND WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE ARE THOSE?
WRONG PEOPLE. BUT I'M TRYING TO BE INCLUSIVE.
YOU'RE GOING TO NEED A BIGGER TENT.

NON SEQUITUR By Wiley

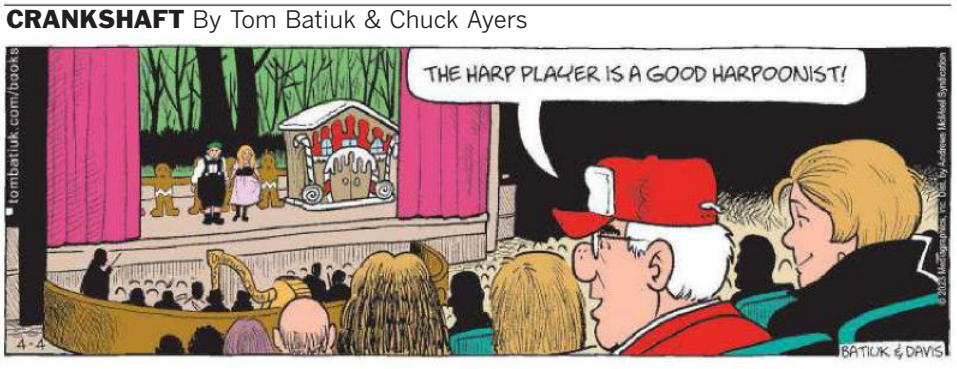
OH, HERE'S A FUN FACT... THIS IS THE SPOT WHERE CRYPTO-CURRENCY WAS CONCEIVED
HISTORICAL LANDMARK
ATM
3-CARD MONTE
WILEY ©2023 WILEY INK, LTD. 4-4

PICKLES By Brian Crane

BABY BLUES By Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman

WE NEED NEW CARPET IN THE LIVING ROOM.
ALREADY?
DIDN'T WE JUST HAVE IT REPLACED?
THAT WAS ONE KID, A FEW HUNDRED SPILLS, AND A DROPPED PIZZA AGO.
TIME FLIES.

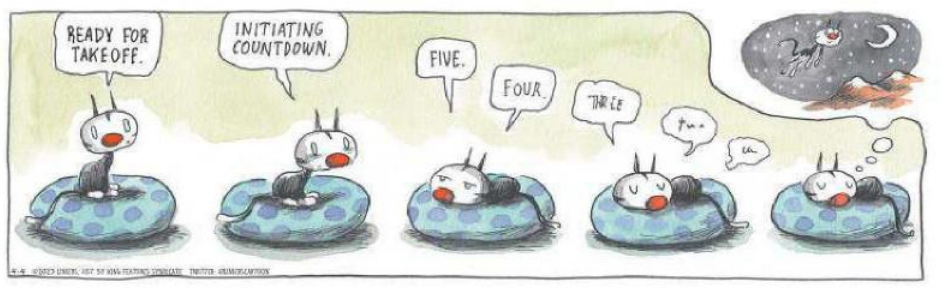
CRANKSHAFT By Tom Batiuk & Chuck Ayers



JUMP START By Robb Armstrong

I SEE NOTHING WRONG WITH HIRING DELRAY! SO WHAT THAT HE HAPPENS TO BE YOUR HUSBAND?
YOU DON'T NEED MY PERMISSION TO HIRE THE EQUIPMENT MANAGER YOU WANT.
YOU'RE THE BOSS.
HOW COME NOBODY TELLS ME THESE THINGS?
©2023 Ruff Sketch, Inc.

MACANUDO By Liniers



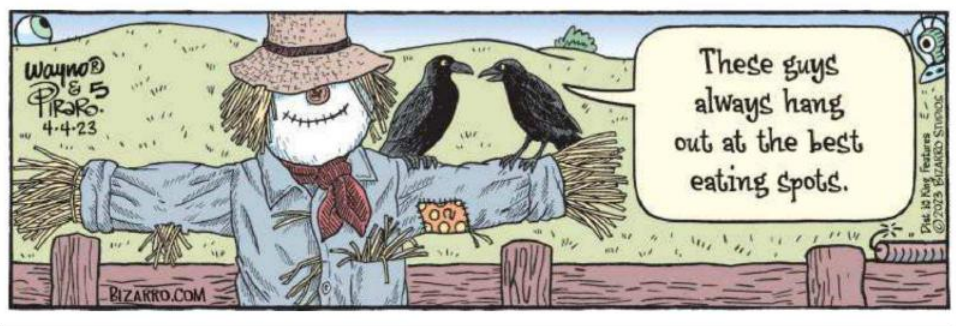
BLONDIE By Dean Young & John Marshall

APRIL IS NATIONAL HUMOR MONTH!
HUMOR MONTH?! WITH ALL THE PROBLEMS IN THE WORLD TODAY?
WE DON'T NEED SOME MONTHLONG DISTRACTION TO CELEBRATE FRIVOLITY!
THIS IS AN OFFICE, NOT A COMEDY CLUB!
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN!
I HEARD THAT!!

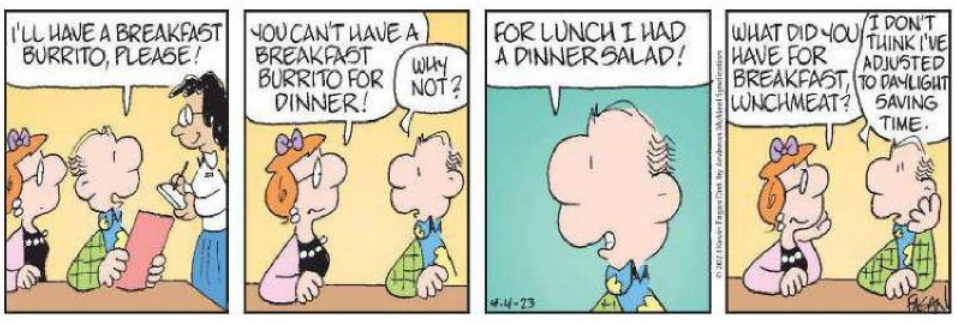
BETWEEN FRIENDS By Sandra Bell-Lundy

SO... YOU WANT TO MOVE TO PARIS FOR SIX MONTHS?
IT'S A MAJOR CAREER OPPORTUNITY, STEVE... IT WOULD LOOK BAD TO DECLINE IT...
-PLUS, IT COULD BE A STEPPING STONE TO FURTHER PROMOTIONS
SO... YOU WANT TO MOVE TO PARIS FOR SIX MONTHS...

BIZARRO By Wayno and Piraro



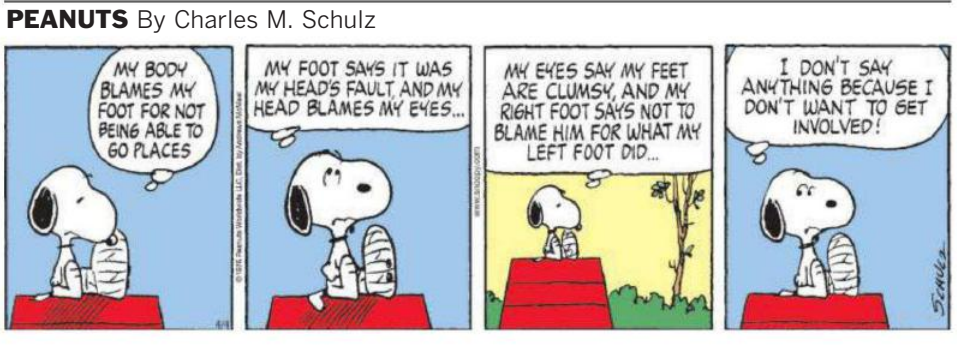
DRABBLE By Kevin Fagan


I'LL HAVE A BREAKFAST BURRITO, PLEASE!
YOU CAN'T HAVE A BREAKFAST BURRITO FOR DINNER!
WHY NOT?
FOR LUNCH I HAD A DINNER SALAD!
WHAT DID YOU HAVE FOR BREAKFAST, LUNCHMEAT?
I DON'T THINK I'VE ADJUSTED TO DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME.

MUTTS By Patrick McDonnell

RAIN, RAIN GO AWAY COME AGAIN ANOTHER DAY.
RAIN, RAIN GO AWAY LITTLE EARLEE WANTS TO PLAY.
I HAVE FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES.
mutts.com

PEANUTS By Charles M. Schulz


MY BODY BLAMES MY FOOT FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO GO PLACES
MY FOOT SAYS IT WAS MY HEAD'S FAULT, AND MY HEAD BLAMES MY EYES...
MY EYES SAY MY FEET ARE CLUMSY, AND MY RIGHT FOOT SAYS NOT TO BLAME HIM FOR WHAT MY LEFT FOOT DID...
I DON'T SAY ANYTHING BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED!

How movie magic helped create a realistic chase

Paramount Pictures and eOne

ACTORS Sophia Lillis, left, Justice Smith and Michelle Rodriguez bring physical reality to "Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves."

['D&D,' from E1]
also wrote the film's script with Michael Gilio, make sure each member of the party has moments to showcase their individual talents.

The tabletop D&D game creates a set of guidelines in which players can let their imaginations fly, and Goldstein and Daley sought to channel that experience in the film set within the fantasy world of Dungeons & Dragons rather than directly adapting any existing story.

"We wanted to make sure the movie captured that spontaneity, the collaboration, the unpredictability, and that need to kind of pivot when things turn against you, as they inevitably do," said Goldstein during a recent video call.

"The thing that's so exciting to me about doing a D&D movie is you can add that element of levity and whimsy to the film without at all betraying the lore," added Daley, who noted that playful irreverence is part of the game's experience. "That sense of heartfeltness and the lack of cynicism was really important to us. ... And I think that there's a way to be humorous without at all undermining the stakes, or the sincerity" of the adventure.

KEY MOMENT

One standout sequence that encapsulates the spirit of the film involves the tiefling druid Doric, played by Sophia Lillis. After reluctantly agreeing to join Edgin (Chris Pine), Holga (Michelle Rodriguez) and Simon's (Justice Smith) party, Doric sneaks into a castle to gather some intel as a literal fly on the wall. Unfortunately, her spying is noticed by the Red Wizard Sofina (Daisy Head), prompting a chase where the camera follows Doric in one, long, seemingly uninterrupted take as she tries to make her escape while shape-shifting into a number of different creatures.

It's a sequence Goldstein and Daley pitched at their very first meeting with Paramount for "Dungeons & Dragons."

Abandoned by her human parents for being a tiefling — someone of human lineage who inherited demonic traits thanks to some act by an ancestor — Doric is wary of humans, and also doesn't quite fit in with the druidic community that has taken her in, the Emerald Enclave.

To prepare for the role, Lillis said she "watched a lot of animal documentaries" to study their movements closely, from the muscles they use to their centers of gravity. This is because, as a druid, Doric has an ability to shape-shift into beasts known as Wild Shape.

"I've always thought movement [and] how to use your body is a very important skill to have when you're acting," said Lillis. She put it to use as Doric, in particular during her transitions into animal form; the stunt team also incorporated animal-like moves into Doric's fighting style, she said.

Doric's most impressive transformation is into an owlbear, a feathered monster with the head of an owl and the build and body of a bear. A druid technically wouldn't be allowed to shape-shift into an owlbear under current D&D rules, but Daley cited the "Rule of Cool" — which allows dungeon masters to ignore some rules for the sake of the story — as their justification.

"She may seem kind of reserved and doesn't say a lot within the context of the group, but [Doric is] her most free when she's these other animals, especially the owlbear," said Daley. "She kind of is most comfortable in her own skin when she's these other creatures."

While Doric does not transform into an owlbear during her big escape sequence, she does Wild Shape into six different creatures over the course of the chase: a fly, a mouse, a bird, a cat, a deer and an Axe Beak — a fictional, tall, flightless bird unique to D&D, its movements here based on ostriches.

Admittedly, one-take sequences "are not easy to do" according to the directors, who got a taste for them after including one in their 2018 hit "Game Night."

A HURDLE

One of the challenges for a single long shot, explained the film's production visual effects supervisor, Ben Snow, is: "How do we break that up into filmable segments? And how do we spot where the blends are going to be between those different segments?"

Preparation for the sequence included storyboards and a rough animation during the previsualization stage — which allowed the team to notice "that you kind of lost your connection to Doric herself" in the initial version, said Snow. "So we changed it so she changed back into herself more."

In the final version of the sequence, Doric shifts back into her tiefling form twice, once into a suit of armor after running around as a mouse and another after a brief transformation into a cat.

Despite the complexity of the scenes, which risked falling into the "uncanny valley" during Doric's transitions, one of the most complicated shots centered on a seemingly simple movement: Doric back in her tiefling form after having been a cat, trying to pull a hood up over her head before walking out into the busy streets of the town. The hood kept getting stuck in her horns.

"Oh, God," said Lillis. "I don't know why it was so hard. [The hood] was flimsy, and the material was weird, and it was sort of windy. It took the entire day."

Indeed, the majority of the sequence was shot on physical sets using as many practical effects as possible.

"Part of what attracted me to visual effects was the magic-trick aspect of it," said Snow. "A lot of directors have a desire to try to keep things as real as possible ... so I kind of like solving problems like this, where [we figure out] how we can keep it real for as much as we can, and then use CG where we can't possibly use it real."

The chase sequence starts, for instance, in the set of the vault room with a computer-generated fly version of Doric. The crew cut a hole in the wall of that set to pull the camera through it, leading the digital fly, before becoming a fully computer-animated scene within the wall. Similarly, the sets used for the portion of the chase where Doric is a mouse were built with a removable floor to allow the camera to get low enough to capture the necessary angles.

And while most of the animals were digitally rendered, including Doric's bird form that falls down a chimney after crashing into a flag, the cat that walks out of the chimney was real.

"We filmed several takes," said Snow. "I got to direct the cat."

Other practical elements include the explosion in the grain room and the pyrotechnics used to blow up an aqueduct (which did not work the first time and took a month to rebuild to shoot again). With the amount of effects the sequence entailed, it was the last VFX shot to be finalized.

As audacious as it is, though, the sequence — which came together thanks to the work of VFX artists from the Moving Picture Company, with some assistance from Industrial Light & Magic — might have been even grander. A shot of an actual dog, meant to be shown reacting to Doric's cat form, was deemed "kind of cheesy," according to Daley, and a moment in which mouse Doric scampered through a dining room filled with guards was lost along the way too.

"We decided," Goldstein said, "that it was one beat too many."

Good sports don't make for great sports

TONY GUTIERREZ Associated Press

LSU'S ANGEL REESE, right, was criticized after making a gesture at Iowa's Caitlin Clark during Sunday's NCAA Women's Final Four championship basketball game, which Reese and her team won.

[NCAA, from E1]
points in the game, and a staggering 41 to defeat South Carolina, remained stone-faced — she actually plays basketball and knows that trash, talking or gesturing, is part of the game. She has done it herself.

Many men, however, including David Axelrod, Keith Olbermann, Danny Kanell and Barstool founder David Portnoy, took it upon themselves to publicly admonish Reese, calling her "classless" and worse.

Social and legacy media exploded, with many pointing out that Clark had used the same "you don't see me" gesture in an earlier game and that the only difference between the two instances was that Clark is white and Reese is Black.

Which is impossible to argue since, when Clark did it, she was praised by many — including Cena.

Reese addressed the issue herself in the after-game presser, pointing out that "when other people do it," the media says nothing, that she was simply answering the "disrespect" she felt had been aimed at a member of her conference, and that she has always faced criticism that she was "too hood ... too ghetto" to fit into women's college basketball.

Which she and her team had just completely owned.

It was not the first time in the Final Four that a Black woman felt obligated to defend the sort of thing that in a men's game would simply be considered, you know, *playing*.

Reese was echoing what South Carolina coach Dawn Staley had said two days before, when asked about her team, which is mostly Black, attracting a reputation for bullying. "We're not bar fighters. We're not thugs. We're not monkeys. We're not street fighters," Staley said, referring to the racist language that has been used to describe them. "This team exemplifies how you need to approach basketball, on the court and off the court."

When called out on the racism of their "classless" comments, Olbermann apologized, but many of Reese's critics simply doubled down, saying that Clark had been classless too.

Trash-talking in sports is not, of course, limited to the players — heated hyperbole is also the lingua franca of columnists and commentators, and certain female athletes, including Reese and especially Clark, have benefited from over-the-top descriptions of their abilities.

But women are, absolutely and undeniably, held to a different standard of behavior than their male counterparts.

Remember when sports writers lost their minds after Brandi Chastain ripped her jersey off after scoring the game-winning penalty kick against China in the Women's World Cup final? Something victorious male soccer players did regularly?

Or Serena Williams being penalized for the kind of heated language that helped make Jimmy Connors and other male tennis players famous?

It isn't just the fundamental unfairness of such examples that's infuriating. It's the systematic squashing of the kind of personal passion and personality in female athletes that their male counterparts are encouraged to showcase.

And of course I am going to mention king of trash-talking, Larry Bird, here, along with his still-famous, openly rancorous on- (and occasionally off-) court feuds with competitors, including and especially Magic Johnson, with whom he also shared a years-long friendship.

People may not have liked Bird (especially if you lived in L.A.) or his style of play, but no one told him to put his hands down and be nice.

Heated exchanges, "I am the greatest" boasting, midgame antics and personal rivalries have been just as important to the success of both certain male players and men's sports in general as any display of prowess.

For good reason.

Displays of anger, ambition, frustration and pride, player-to-player beefs, unlikely friendships and long-running rivalries humanize the game. Outbursts and competitive exchanges remind the audience that athletes are often feeling the same emotions that their fans are.

Jumping all over Reese for a little well-earned if unnecessary boasting, or coming to Clark's defense like she's some 12-year-old who just wandered into a national finals game, diminishes what these women really are: top college athletes in the midst of redefining the game.

It's also an exhibit of the very sexism that has kept women's sports second to men's. Those who argue against wage parity or women's sports stadiums inevitably claim that women athletes should receive less because they do not generate the kind of ratings and profit that the men do. Poor marketing and penny-pinching investment are rarely cited as factors, either. It's just that the games aren't as intense and entertaining.

Well, the first way to ensure women's games aren't as intense and entertaining is to publicly shame any woman who reveals the same kind of emotions or engages in the same kind of behavior that make men's games so intense and entertaining.

The insistence that women act "nice" or be "classy" has kept women on the fringes of virtually every sphere of power in this country, from presidential politics ("you're likable enough, Hillary") to prestige television (imagine if Tony Soprano had been a woman — you can't, because no female character could have gotten away with it).

Study after study shows that characteristics perceived as hallmarks of ambition, confidence and focus in men are seen as manipulative, arrogant and cold in women.

Add racism to the mix, and it isn't just the national championship that Angel Reese helped win.

I can think of nothing better for women's basketball than a heated public rivalry between Reese and Clark, complete with repeated on-court exchanges and stories of legendary trash-talking that carries over into the pros.

Maybe such a thing would, like Bird and Johnson's, blossom into an off-court friendship. Maybe it wouldn't.

But as Sunday's game proved, it would make for really great basketball.